Wide Prideaux

OLD ASHBURTON,

Being Recollections of

MASTER ROBERT PRIDEAUX,

(ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,)

1509—1569.

TOTNES:

PRINTED AT THE "TIMES" AND "WESTERN GUARDIAN" OFFICES, BY T. & A. MORTIMORE.

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Scarce 1882

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Author's Introduction.

It is a problem of some importance how best to present scraps of history and antiquarian gleanings in a popular form, whereby the general reader may obtain some idea of the customs, persons, and places in ancient times, without sacrificing fact to fiction.

In the following *recollections* the author will endeavour by aid of a story to link together a chain of incidents connected with the town and neighbourhood of Ashburton during the Reformation. The form of recollections by a single person is selected as it permits more detail to be indulged in than a simple narrative would warrant.

From the valuable transcription of the old Churchwarden's accounts recently published, Mr. Robert Prideaux, attorney-at-law, appears to have been a leading spirit in those stirring times and lived far into the reign of Queen Elizabeth, he is therefore an appropriate person to form the centre figure in a story of his native town at that period.

The persons and places mentioned, as well as most of the incidents are real, the details however are gathered from various sources to enable the reader in some measure to realise the fact, that the names in the old records represent the men and women who in their day occupied the same streets and fields, and transacted their business among the same natural scenes as Ashburtonians of to-day, who it is hoped will accept this attempt of *the Author* and

"Be to his faults a little blind."

P. F. S. A.

Ashburton, 1st June, 1882.

OLD ASHBURTON,

BEING RECOLLECTIONS OF

Master Robert Prideaux (Attorney-at-law), 1509—1569.

CHAPTER I.

FAMILY INTRODUCTIONS.

I am now old, residing in the house inherited from my father, Master Thomas Prideaux, situated in West Street, Ayshperton, where I have lived all my long life, and have taken part in some way or other in every event during the stirring times of the Reformation. In my easy chair I can look calmly on the changes I have seen, while at the time they occurred they excited and stirred the whole nation, often raising my ire and leading me to actions I can hardly now credit; but I see those troubles and anxieties were necessary to purge our land from popery and superstition by which for so many centuries the people had been enslaved.

As I have thus witnessed all that has transpired in my native town since the century began, I have determined to devote the leisure hours of a long winter season to jot down such as my memory can recall, that my grandchildren may know the great changes that were wrought during the lifetime of one person in the quiet old Burg of Ayshperton.

The family of Prideaux, of which I am an humble member, has long been settled in this valley of the

Ashburn, and at different times members of it have occupied positions of trust and importance, whilst others have been united with well known neighbouring families, my Father's great Aunt Julyan Prideaux, married Master Adam Somaster, of Widecombe.

The earliest event in which I took part, was connected with the marriage of my dear sister Alice to Master Adam Williams, of Stowford, Ivybridge, the recent death and honourable funeral in Harford Church of their son, my nephew Thomas Williams, who only a few years ago in 1560 was the Speaker of Parliament, and Feodatory to our Gracious Sovereign Queen Elizabeth, brings to my mind many circumstances connected with the first acquaintance we had with his family, which resulted in my sister becoming Mistress Williams and the mother of a distinguished man. The perusal of various papers of my Father's, throws much light on what I only dimly remember of those by-gone days, and I cannot do better than commence my *recollections* at that period.

It was about the time of the marriage of our young king Henry VIII to the ill-fated Catherine of Aragon, and therefore at Midsummer 1509, I was a school boy under the tuition of Father Hellyer, a monk from Buckfast, who was Presbyter of St. Lawrence, whose duty it was to sing masses for the souls of the burgesses of this Burg who died members of the Guild, as well as to instruct the burgesses' sons, for which he received a salary from the Guild and Parish lands.

I well remember the first time Master Williams came to our house, he was on his way from Stowford to Exeter, to join the nobleman in whose family he then served after the manner of the times, as a finish to his education. One evening he was brought to our door by a serving man, having met with an accident on Bowden hill through his horse falling on him.

Father Hellyer happened to be in the street at the time, and recognising the young man, immediately begged my Mother to offer him all the comforts our house could afford, and being like most monks skilled in surgery, tendered his assis-

tance and got young Williams quickly in bed, where he remained many days, in fact it was some weeks before he could proceed on his journey.

Afterwards it was whispered by the gossips, that on seeing who the wounded man was, the good Father with an eye to business applied such a blister that the stay with us was more from its effects than from the fall, and he is said to have afterwards boasted that he made the match which would turn out a good day's work for himself; but poor man he did not live to see the wedding.

It was during this forced stay at our house that Adam and my sister became attached to one another; some months afterwards I remember he and his father came from Stowford and were long in consultation with my father and mother, after which it was understood in the family that Alice would shortly be married and leave us for good. Then began such working and consultations, such turning out of linen and woollen goods which had accumulated in my Mother's store chests, for she, like a prudent woman, as she was, had kept her household spinning and weaving for years in preparation for the marriage of her daughter whenever it might come about, in order that being handsomely provided with such articles to start her husband's household she might reflect credit on her own family.

Being a young boy at the time little notice was taken of my presence, and so I often overheard much that was not intended for me to hear. For instance, one evening in the autumn I had been with some schoolfellows on Tarry shooting at rabbits as they fed between the furze bushes with a new bow father had bought for me, for he said it was right that every English boy should know how to use his national weapon. Returning later than usual I slipped into the house unobserved and entered the parlour or common sitting-room of the family. Here I found my father's cousin Mistress Ford who was a grand-daughter of old Aunt Julyan Somaster, of Widecombe, and had married Master John Ford, a person of great worship in Ayshperton, who held a Manor and was called Esquire.

Mistress Ford was esteemed very knowledgable in all family matters, and as she associated with persons of higher standing than we did, was supposed to know what would be required on the occasion.

I heard Mistress Ford ask Mother what dower our Father would give Alice.

"Master Williams requireth three hundred marks (£200) to be paid with her," replied my mother "Adam might for holding up his finger have a widow with a thousand marks, but, quoth he, 'tis a love match which are rare in these days so I must not press for more. My husband says he has bound Master Williams to convey to his son within twelve days of the wedding, land at Stowford worth twenty pounds, and to leave the heirs, male of Adam and Alice, land to the value of forty pounds, provided the lad is governed to his father as a son ought to be."

"That is as things should be," said Mistress Ford, "children ought to be *governed to their parents*, or to be cut off; but you have never had trouble with Alice and have spared the whip too. I would my Margaret could be with some lady of worship, for we be either of us weary of the other. Since Midsummer I have beaten her every week but to no good. But when, cousin, is the marriage to take place."?

"There now" said Mother "how would you choose the luckiest day? you know the first meeting of the young people was through an accident, it would be ill not to turn the bad luck into good. Father Hellyer says we must have patience till the feast of St. Andrew comes round, for he can give good luck to lovers if presents are made to his altar and proper forms gone through at night, the good Father will help us, for he takes mightily to Master Williams."

"Holy Katherine! did you ever," quoth Mistress Ford "to think that you, cousin, should come to conjuring to find a lucky day to marry your daughter on, I trow the soonest would be the luckiest for my Margaret."

At this juncture Mother caught sight of me, and I was sent off to wash before supper and told not to eavesdrop while my elders were talking, so I heard no more.

CHAPTER II.

THE PARISH CHURCH IN 1509.

"*Omne ignotum pro magnifico.*"

"Everything we are ignorant of is taken for something magnificent."

The winter came on apace. At the Court Leet of the Bishop, Master John Ford was chosen Portreeve by the freemen, and the Guild dinner was held as usual at which Mistress Ford and many ladies were present which highly pleased the good dame.

At the first Portreeve's court, Nan Walsh, a scolding loud tongued woman was presented for gossiping about the delay in Alice's wedding. The Portreeve threatened her with the brank (an instrument placed over the head with a plate of iron protruding into the mouth upon the tongue), she was however ordered to be whipped from the bowling green to the bull-ring and thence to the town pump in North-street. This was carried out the next day, all the boys being sent by Father Hellyer to look on from the steps of St. Lawrence Chapel. The wretched woman was stripped to the waist, her hands tied to a pole carried on high by two men, in front walked the Town Crier with his bell, and behind a constable with a short rope with which he laid on until the blood flowed. At the bull-ring Nan fainted, but was restored by a bucket of water being dashed over her face. Up North-street she howled lustily and at the town pump was liberated, her friends cursing us and all who had anything to do in the matter, a mob of boys escorted her home to Cad Lane with yells and hooting.

Saint Martin's day soon came round with its Fair of three days which began on 11th November, the first fall of snow lay on the ground, and prevented the pedlars and merchants coming from a distance, and as the farmers could not bring their wool, the Buckfast monks, who were the principal buyers were sadly put out.

According to custom Father Hellyer collected his boys and took us round the town singing songs relating to the Saints, but it was very cold, and few people abroad, so he did not get much. By mid-day the streets were empty, and people who could afford it were eating their geese.

At our house feasted the Sub Prior of Buckfast, Sir Thomas Furneaux our vicar, Father Hellyer, cousin John Prideaux, the clerk, also Master and Mistress Ford, with their daughter Margaret, and Uncle John, and Aunt Elizabeth Prideaux. We young people had a famous day, new cyder was given to all who asked, and after the bones of two geese had been well picked and it was drawing dark Mother produced some famous aquevite (whiskey), which she had herself distilled from malt.

When Mother, Mistress Ford, and the ladies withdrew to her own parlour, Father asked Father Furneaux, the vicar, how best to propitiate St. Andrew, and obtain good luck to Alice on her wedding, as well as the means to select the best day.

It amused me much, and I believe Father was surprised to hear the remarks made by the trio of priests, for each suggested a favourite method in which he himself was most interested.

The Sub-Prior's plan required Alice to visit the Abbey Church by night, and there go through some idle and blasphemous incantations by a certain grave in the choir; but father spoke out sharply "Enough! Enough! Sir Monk, no visiting Buckfast by night for my daughter until she has her husband with her, and is off my hands."

It was suggested by the Vicar, and Cousin John, and finally agreed to, that Alice should herself present daily a candle at the altar of St. Andrew, and a silver figure of two hearts; that Mother should also present a silk velvet banner with his cross embroidered in silver thereon in time for the feast day on November 30th, with ample gratuity laid on the altar. That according to an old custom the sacristan Walter Antony should have a fee to attend at night with his wheel, on which Alice herself might cast lots for a lucky day all this Cousin John, the clerk, promised to see properly carried out.

The next morning my sister took me with her to the church before Mass, where we found Master Anthony, the sacristan, busy about the vestments, and Cousin John playing on the organ, of which instrument he was a proficient, having been some years at Exon attached to the Cathedral in the time of Bishop Redman, who took a fancy to him as a boy. Alice then bought a wax candle from the sacristan, which she lighted and placed on the stand before the high altar, where other candles were burning, which had been presented by persons from the country attending the second day of the fair. She then kneeling down made her vows to St. Andrew until the priest commenced to sing mass.

The church fifty years ago was very different from what it was after its restoration, when the rood loft and screens were erected, or from what it is now the Commissioners have swept through the land. There was then no screen across the chancel, and the high altar could be seen from under the tower, over it was a handsomely carved reredos, in the panels of which were pictures of scenes in the life and martyrdom of St. Andrew, that in the centre represented the Saint as an old man on a cross formed like a letter X. The altar was covered with an embroidered velvet cloth, and on it stood a tabernacle or carved cabinet, in which a fragment of bone was preserved, brought long ago from Greece by a crusader, and said to be a part of the Saint; a large silver gilt crucifix stood on the shrine, with tall wooden candles tipped with wax on each side. There was also a silver and crystal pyx, in which a portion of the host was preserved for the use of the sick, then called our Lord's Body, and on the north side of the chancel an organ, at which the clerk was playing. About the side walls were small nitches in which earthenware jars were placed on their sides, their open mouths even with the face of the wall, these were said to increase the sound, and to enable the priest's voice to be heard more clearly throughout the church.

At the eastern end of the north aisle was the chapel of our Lady the Blessed Virgin, whose image gaily dressed in the fashion of a century

earlier, with a crown of stars around her brow, and the infant Saviour in her arms, occupied the centre nich of the reredos. In the other nitches were rude pictures of the adoration of the Wise Men, and the Holy Mother pierced in the heart with five swords to represent the wounds of her son. On the low rail at the foot of the altar hung numerous little tokens, placed there by worshippers in distress. Among them I noticed a small wooden baby, put there by Mistress Ford when Margaret was a child and had a distemper, to keep the Holy Mother of God in constant remembrance that the child needed her help ; also a wax leg that our old servant Simon gave when Black Prince my father's horse kicked his leg. The chapel was lighted by two windows, that on the east over the altar having stained glass like the great eastern window above St. Andrew's shrine, the small gilt lamp was always burning before the Blessed Virgin.

At the eastern end of the south aisle corresponding with our Lady Chapel, was that of St. John Baptist ; here the altar was surmounted by a picture of the death of the Saint, in which the daughter of Herodias, a big bouncing maid was carrying his head on a trencher. Mother always pointed out the woman to us as the worst of her sex, calling her a brazen huzzy. In the centre stood the stone font on a raised dias.

In the north and south transepts were the chapels of St. Thomas of Canterbury, and Saint Katherine, these at that time were not separated from the aisles. A wooden altar stood on the east side of each chapel, over which on the wall hung a picture of the Saint to whom it was dedicated. Thereon were placed tabernacles with small doors, that of St. Thomas being of richly gilt metal studded with precious stones, and a large crucifix on each with candles on either side. The altar cloth of St. Katherine was a very rich piece of embroidery, the gift of Master Ford's mother, and a red banner with a figure of the Saint worked in gold hung from its staff by the side.

A votive candle stand was placed in each chapel at the foot of the altar steps, on which candles were burning. Brass lamps hung by chains from

the roof, which were always lighted on Sundays and Saints days.

Against the pillars on the sides facing the aisles and ambulatories were the stations of our Lord, which consisted of pictures of his passion on pieces of wood, these were appointed places of visitation, where repeating certain prayers as ordered by the priest would win special grace. They were eight in number, and before some of them people were kneeling telling their beads.

Against the southern pillar of the transept over the chancel rail stood the carved pulpit, with three or four steps to enter it. The seats were mostly in the chapels, although a few benches were around the pulpit, both in the nave and chancel, they were very old and patched, although the carved ends of some showed good workmanship, and were great attraction to us boys, for we played with them whilst Father Furneaux was preaching. I remember one hot S. John Baptist's Day I polished the nose of a Saint during the long sermon, but in those days sermons were short compared with what we hear now.

The Vicar wished the parish to place a carved screen to divide the chancel from the nave with a rood loft over, similar to the beautiful stone screen, then lately erected in St. Mary, at Totnes, also to enclose the four chapels from the aisles, and partition off the Chapels of Our Lady, and St. Thomas from the chancel. My Father and Master Ford promised to assist and do their best; how they performed their promise I shall write by and bye.

After the Mass had been celebrated Cousin John, the clerk, came over to my sister, saying that he had told the Sacristan what had been promised, but she need not trouble about presenting a candle every day provided she tickled Antony's hand now and then, as he would see it properly performed.

So having fairly commenced her undertaking we returned home, and Alice told Mother how she had managed.

CHAPTER III.

ST. ANDREW'S DAY.

"The dedication of the Church is yearly had in mind,
With worship passing Catholic, and in a wondrous kind."

"To Andrew all the lovers and pining wooers come,
Believing through his aid and certain ceremonies done,
(While as to him they presents bring, and conjure all the night),
To have good luck and to obtain their end and chief delight."

BARNABE GOOGE.

Our dedication feast on S. Andrew's day drew on apace. Mother and Alice were very anxious as to the good or ill luck the day would bring in the matter of the marriage.

Father had ordered from Exon a rich silk banner on which S. Andrew's cross was embroidered in silver, and Alice had purchased from a pedlar a pair of silver hearts through which an arrow was fixed, to be duly presented at the high altar.

On 29th November, the eve of the feast, we went to see the decorations in the church, where we found the pavement, (which was certainly in a very bad state, the old tiling being torn up in many places) strewed with sweet smelling herbs, the piers and pillars decorated with ivy and such green boughs as could be obtained at that season of the year. Anthony, the Sacristan, was busy cleaning the plate and laying out the vestments to be used, Cousin John, the clerk, was dressing the high altar and its tabernacles, and the chorister boys were running about in high glee in the gathering twilight.

The following morning the sun rose pretty clear although a white frosty mist hung in the valley of the Yeo. At eight o'clock the day bell rung out the day of the month, after which the bells attempted a peal, but as the new tenor bell was not yet re-cast it was a sorry noise, still it served to call all to Matins. From the highest opening in the spire, far up above the ivy hung St. Andrew's banner, and people were flocking in from the

neighbouring villages, dressed in their holiday garments, to do honour to our patron, so we saw there would be a brave gathering.

Leaving the house in good time, Father and Mother carrying the new banner, and Alice her silver votive hearts, which by the bye she kept out of sight, we pass through the north porch and proceeded direct to the high altar, at the chancel rails Cousin John and the Sacristan met us and received the gifts, immediately placing the hearts before the altar, and the banner on a staff which had been provided for it in a rest against the wall. Then turning into Our Lady Chapel we knelt in private devotion, while the priests were preparing for Mass. Father Hellyer used to instruct us to occupy all possible spare time in repeating *Paternosters*, and also to do so at any time we could not follow the latin service. The priests appeared in their high festival vestments, highly ornamented alb and stole over which they wore their dalmatics and gorgeous copes.

The Vicar appeared similiarly arrayed, except that he wore no cope, then he approached the altar and took from it his rich chasable, which he placed on his neck and proceeded to sing Mass. When at the ringing of the Sanctus bell all the congregation fell on their knees, bowing the head in reverence to the Host, the sight was a very imposing one, and struck me much ; then we took up our Mass penny and returned to our seats.

After Mass Father Furneaux bore the body of Christ, in a procession around the church, enclosed in the jewelled crystal pyx which he pressed to his breast. First walked Cousin John in a close fitting white alb as "aqucebajulas," or water bearer, who sprinkled holy water on the kneeling worshippers from a vessel carried in his left hand, the great silver cross was carried by Jim Gye, in cassock and surplice, then came the Vicar bearing the Host ; the baldachino carried by Masters Ford, Roger Wyndeyat, Doblear, and my father, as representing the principal lay men of the parish, all the priests, deacons, and choir followed in their proper order chanting a processional hymn, and Mother's new banner was used for the first time carried before

the pagent of St. Andrew, immediately following the Host. We all remained kneeling until the holy vessel was again deposited on the high altar.

The congregation soon dispersed, except a few who remained behind for confession.

On our return to breakfast who should we meet coming down West Street but Master Adam Williams, he quickly left his horse in Old Simon's care and joined us.

At eleven o'clock the Vicar was to preach, so Father, Mother, and all our party prepared to attend. At the porch we found the image of St. Andrew with a bundle of duly sealed indulgences in its hand, a priest stood by the side pressing all who entered to buy a pardon for forty days in honour of the Saint, for such would give release from all sins for that period.

On the outside adjoining the porch, stalls were being quickly fixed at which food and drink were sold, many peddlers were also spreading out their wares. We passed into the nave of the church, and getting places as near the pulpit as possible awaited the sermon.

Father Furneaux soon appeared in his ordinary vestments and mounted the pulpit, from which he preached a long sermon about St. Andrew, in the course of which he said "The brothers S. S. Peter and Andrew were on the sea fishing when Jesus on the land called them, whereupon they forsook all and followed Him from that day forward. The sea represented the world, being changing, unsafe, and subject to storms; the great fish in the sea eat the small ones, so do rich lords destroy poor people, living on their labour. As the sea is bitter so is the world, in sorrow we come hither, in toil we here abide, in woe we depart. Let us "said the Vicar" follow S. Andrew's example and long to go hence to a sure habitation where the Lord dwelleth. But consider with what glory S. Andrew left this world, which came about in this wise. When the Roman governor compelled the christians to worship idols, he was withstood by S. Andrew, who preached Christ to him. The Governor answered "Your faith is vain for the Jews crucified your Jesus." "Nay" said S. Andrew "thou dost not

understand the mystery of the cross, which is a sacrifice for mankind, hearken to me and you shall admit it."

The Governor then ordered him to sacrifice to the gods, or the sacrifice of the cross should be illustrated in him. To which S. Andrew replied "If I should be affrighted by the cross of Christ, I should not proclaim the glory of the cross." Then being angry the Governor ordered him to be taken and fastened to a cross with cords by his hands and feet, to which S. Andrew went rejoicing, not ceasing to preach to the people. When he came to the place he exclaimed "Hail Cross! which art consecrated by the body of Christ, before which time thou wast an object of earthly fear, but now indeed of heavenly love, I have always desired to embrace thee." Thereupon the executioners lifted him on to the cross, from which he ceased not for two days to preach to the people, there being twenty thousand assembled at that place. At the end of that time the Governor wished to take him down, but blessed S. Andrew cried with a loud voice, "Permit not me thy servant to be separated from Thee, for I heard Thy voice and have followed Thee. I now confess Thee on this cross." Then a great splendour so surrounded him that they could not look upon him, which continued for half-an-hour, and with the waning light his spirit left him. "To S. Andrew come boldly," continued the Vicar, "his passion and glory will commend you to God our Saviour, and grant indulgence from sin to those of you who have on this Holy day done honour to the Blessed Saint at his altar in this parish."

Such was the Vicar's sermon, I cannot say that I remember it as I have written, but my father was so much struck with it, that by the assistance of Cousin John he committed as much as he could to writing, the which I have now before me. Cousin John told us that at the cathedral there were many splendid manuscripts of the legends of the Saints, collected by Bishop Grandisson, out of which the lessons were read on Saints' days, and the Vicar spent much time in studying them, when connected with the chapter before his appointment to Aysheperton.

At the close of the sermon we left the church and found the whole space between the porch and street crowded with booths, and people making a terrible hubbub.

Many Monks had come in from Buckfast, and were doing business with the farmers for wool. At the corner of the street a Friar was preaching to a little knot of people standing by. Minstrels were singing at the corner of our garden by church lane, and with them two jesters were amusing a large crowd.

Passing quickly to our door we entered the house and prepared for dinner.

That day our dinner was a feast, as father invited on those occasions all his acquaintances, who happened to come from a distance, to his house. Of course Father Hellyer was a standing dish with us, especially when Adam Williams was present, and the Sub-Prior also found his way in.

It was a grand day, our guests talked much and yet made good despatch with the dishes Mother had provided ; the long table was supported on tressels in the hall, fresh rushes had been strewed on the floor for the occasion, so the room smelt fresh and nice, although it had not been sweetened for some time ; father was always very particular on this point, as he believed the dreadful distempers so often breaking out were caused by the accumulations of fat, grease, and leavings by the dogs on the floors of rooms used by the general household, especially in towns.

After *latin*, as the grace after meat was usually called, the table was removed and Adam invited me to accompany Alice and himself to see what was going on outside, in the town.

It was three by the clock, and the beer, cyder and aquevite, which had been consumed, was telling on the heads of the pleasure seekers, who were singing as they walked arm and arm through the streets, while from the taverns came the noise of quarrels, oaths and riot.

Avoiding some noisy groups we turned into the churchyard, where our attention was first directed to a peddler standing on a cask, with laces, ribbons and all sorts of female temptations hung round his

neck, while his box was suspended by a leathern strap before him in which were exposed knives, trinkets and sundry small goods.

He was a merry fellow and drew a number of young people around him, now and then singing the praises of his wares in this fashion—

"Lawn as white as driven snow ;
Cyprus black as ere was crow ;
Gloves as sweet as damask roses ;
Masks for faces and for noses ;
Bugle-bracelet, necklace-amber ;
Perfume for a lady's chamber ;
Golden quoifs (caps) and stomachers,
For my lads to give their dears ;
Pins and poking sticks of steel,
What maids lack from head to heel :
Come buy of me, come ; come buy, come buy ;
Buy lads, or else your lasses cry ; come buy."

Now then, dear heart," said Adam to my sister, "take your choice ; gloves or ribbons, or a small Venice mirror to see a pretty face in."

But master peddler, smelling business, hopped down from his cask in a trice, and exhibited his most tempting wares from the depth of his pack. The result was that a pair of scented gloves, and an amber necklace became Alice's property, and a red golden mark dropped into the peddler's pouch. As we turned to leave he commenced singing—

"Will you buy any tape,
Or a lace for your cape,
My dainty-duck, my dear—a ?
Any silk, any thread,
Any toys for your head,
Of the new'st and fin'st, fin'st wear-a ?
Come to the peddler ;
Money's a meddler,
That doth alter all men's ware-a."

At the church porch we found the Priests doing a good business with their indulgences.

"Now, little heart," said Adam, "it is my turn. I have a mind to be free to enjoy myself for forty days. Now, Sir, Priest how much for your bull, and what sort of sins does it cover ; what licence will you give ?

"Cover say you," replied the Priest, "why no sin can exist with S. Andrew's indulgence, think you not that the Blessed Saint has sufficient good works in store for all you can do in six weeks ? Remember you not how he rejoiced to be crucified,

embracing the cross itself, and how oil springs out of the ground at the spot on this his day? nay, honour him by trying."

So Master Williams took the indulgence, which he carefully folded and placed in his pouch.

In the church we found many country people, chiefly women, standing in little knots, staring at the pictures and crossing themselves before the altars; there was a subdued hum of voices re-sounding through the whole place.

Leaving the Church, we pass through rows of stalls and booths, at which a lively business was going on, and gained the street, making our way home, as Alice did not like the boisterous crowds.

Here I found some of my school mates enquiring for me; it was getting dark, so we ran round by King's lane to the Market; in the large upper chamber we heard music, so up the steps we went, and found a party of young men and girls beginning to dance. We looked on for some time until a noise from the bull-ring attracted our attention, which we found came from a wrestling match between some Tinners and townsmen; there was much quarrelling, because the byestanders interfered to rescue Jim Gye from a brawny Tinner, who was standing over him inflicting heavy kicks.

This led to a free fight, when Master Ford, the Portreeve, appeared with his constables, and after a time restored order.

When I got home I found all our party very comfortable in the parlour listening to Master Williams, who was giving an account of his travels, which to me seemed wondrous, but I had not then learned to make allowance for traveller's tales.

It appeared that while quite a boy there was a great rage for pilgrimages to St. James de Compostello in Spain, owing to the Pope declaring that a pilgrimage there, should be equal in virtue to one to Jerusalem. The offer was a grand one as for quarter the cost and peril a man might gain a character for sanctity and wear the scollop-shell. The rage at one period was so great that to prevent the drain of money out of this kingdom, shipowners were obliged to obtain a license from the crown to take pilgrims.

Among others who took advantage of this opportunity was the nobleman, to whose household Adam was attached. He told us that more than fifty pilgrims sailed from Plymouth, in Master John Shipley's vessel, the "St. Catherine," and a few years before more than two thousand pilgrims had gone from England alone. For days they lay in a fog near Land's End in Cornwall, expecting to be driven on the rocks, and either drowned or killed by the inhabitants of those parts, who never spared a shipwrecked person, claiming all that the sea cast on shore as their due. Then a violent storm lay on them in the Atlantic, which carried them to the coast of France; at one time they could hear the roar of the waves against the shore.

During those days of fear the religion of the pilgrims was tested; prayers and vows to the Saints were offered up, most of which were forgotton, however, when they came safe on land. Adam told some curious tales of the expedients resorted to, to evade the fulfillment of some, and the subtle, mental reservations which eased the consciences of those who had been most gushing while the storm lasted.

The delay on the voyage caused them to miss being present on St. James's day, when the whole city gives itself up to religious excitement. Still, he seemed to have observed much and brought a silver reliquary back with him, which he showed us.

After the usual round of devotions and penance, the party fearing again to trust the Ocean, returned through France, where they spent some months; here Adam saw the vintage and many other sights not to be forgotten.

The evening passed very quickly with such good company: now and then we heard shouts and drunken brawls from the street, as the country people collected to return home in groups. At one time a more than usual noise and hubbub from a tavern opposite the church, followed by shouts of derisive laughter and clattering of horses hoofs, attracted our attention.

Adam ran out, and after a while returned holding his sides and bursting with laughter. When he

grew quiet and had gained breath, Alice made him tell what he had seen.

It seems the priest of . . . . had brought some of his flock to the festival, and they in return had treated the good man so well in the tavern, that when the time arrived to leave, the Father could not find his legs, whereupon one of the party procured a horse on which the priest was placed, a man on each side holding a leg to keep him up, in this manner he was escorted through the street to the admiration of scoffers. My father seemed very much pained, and declared it was such doings as these, and not the Gospellers, that the church had to fear, and he predicted that great changes must come soon, but dreaded they would lead to ruin and all sorts of evils.

While in France, Adam had been thrown into company with persons who held the so-called heretical doctrines, which were at that time gaining ground in Germany, and which indeed were to be found everywhere held by some of the most thinking people.

Still he continued for many years a Papist to all appearances, although from his expressions I am certain he inwardly despised a great deal as superstition that we considered religion, which must have sadly shocked Alice, who was a very devout and good catholic at that time.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEXTON'S WHEEL.

"Every sexton hath a wheel, that hangeth for the view,
Marked round about with certain days, unto the Virgin due.
Now when that any servant of our Lady cometh here,
And seeks to have some certain day by lot for to appear,
This sexton turns the wheel about, and bids the stander-by,
To hold the thread whereby he doth, the time and season try."

BARNABE GOOGE.

It seems that Adam Williams had been pressing Alice and mother to name the day for their wedding, knowing nothing of the plan arranged to

select a lucky day, of which he was intentionally kept in ignorance.

As the evening grew late and supper was ended, Alice and mother withdrew to mother's room, while father and Master Williams continued to talk over sundry matters, but before parting Alice promised to name the day on the following morning.

The servants and household had gone to rest, the streets were once more quiet, when mother and Alice appeared at the back-stairs wrapped in warm cloaks and hoods, and beckoning for me to follow, sallied out into the garden, and made way across the churchyard to the wedding door of the church on the South side. The moon was nearly full and very bright; it was about ten of the clock. At the door we were joined by cousin John, and the Sacristan with his lantern, who opened the door, and we stood in the half dark church; the rays of the moon-light made the decorations look very awful: the long sprays of ivy around the pillars resembled the ghastly creatures one sees on the capital letters in Manuscripts. I clung to mother on one side as we followed the Sacristan up the nave, our shadows following close after us, and our footsteps echoing through the place.

I think Alice was very nervous, as I heard mother whispering to her. When we arrived before the High Altar, the moon was shining in through the right hand chancel window, leaving everything about the East end dark and dreadful, except the reredos with its pictures, which were dimly lighted by the small suspended lamp.

Cousin John took Alice by the hand and led her to the steps of the altar, saying, "Now, little one, kneel down; don't be afraid, and repeat after me,"

"O Sancte Andrea effice ut bonum pium acquiram virum; hodie mihi ostende quolis sit cui me in uxorem ducere debet. Amen."

When Alice had repeated this in a feeble trembling voice, he said:

"Now, quick! come to our Lady Chapel, where Walter is awaiting us with his wheel."

We then turned into the Chapel and stood still in the moonlight before the altar. The *Sexton's*

Wheel, which Walter held in his hand, consisted of a round piece of parchment on which the calendar was marked out, and was so arranged in a frame that it revolved by pulling a string, and when again at rest, the string would cut through the division of the required day.

Alice, still trembling all over, took the string and moved the wheel round, then Walter held up his lantern to see the day at which it stopped, this proved a difficult task for the parchment was much worn and dirty, and Walter's hand was unsteady and his sight dull; at last he exclaimed "Good luck, Mistress Prideaux! you have a lucky day indeed, but you will have to wait until Trinity Sunday."

"Trinity Sunday" quoth Cousin John "that is lucky, let us see when it falls, Our Lady forbid that it come in May, but the earlier in June the better."

Then, taking the lantern from the Sacristan's hand, he went into the vestry, behind the High Altar, to consult an old table of days, leaving us in the dark. It was very dreadful; we could hear our hearts beat. The Clerk was not two minutes absent, but it seemed a much longer time; when he returned he took Alice by the hand saying "All right, little cousin, St. Andrew has given you the best day in the year, it falls on the first of June, and Trinity Sunday, too; now, quickly home to bed and don't forget good Walter to-morrow, and a wax candle for a thank offering before the altar."

So we slipped quietly in by the garden and up the back stairs to our chambers.

I have often thought since that Cousin John and Walter, the Sacristan, must have arranged the whole thing, but at that time we fully believed St. Andrew himself had selected the day in return for our presents and Alice's prayers.

The following morning, Master Williams was eagerly waiting to hear the decision as to the date of the wedding, and was much cast down when Mother told him that Alice had selected Trinity Sunday, which was still six months distant, but as she seemed in such high spirits about it he was obliged to accept her decision as final, with as good grace as possible.

After our morning meal, and a parting interview with Alice, Adam's horse was led out into the street, where he mounted, and waving adieu to all, rode gallantly up the street towards Buckfast, to visit the Abbot, who had promised him some famous young apple trees, of a sort brought originally from Normandy, for which Buckfast was famous. Indeed, the strongest and brightest cyder was made by the monks, who took great pains with their orchards.

During the day, Mistress Ford and Aunt Elizabeth, Cousin John's mother, who lived with him in the Clerk's house, looked in to talk over the events of yesterday. I suppose Mother told them all that had taken place, for Mistress Ford said she would look out among her papers, where she thought she had something about lucky days for marriages.

A day or two afterwards a few friends of Mother's came to *four hours*, (a meal taken at four o'clock, corresponding to our modern afternoon tea; but tea and coffee were then unknown.) We had varieties of cakes, clotted cream, and of course a junket; also apple puffs, syllabub and preserves. The drink was supplied from a large tankard of sack, and another of gascon wine, jugs of new milk, and a leather jack of beer. When all the party were gathered round the table Mistress Ford was asked if she had found her papers on lucky wedding days. The good dame seemed much pleased to be quoted as an authority, and she began quite a homily to Alice, telling her she was lucky indeed, that Trinity Sunday was the best day of all the year, especially when it fell in June, which month was in itself a lucky one. Then, drawing a roll from her pocket, she read from it as follows :—

"Advent marriage doth denie,
But Hilary gives thee libertie;
Septuagesima says thee nay;
Eight days from Easter says you may;
Rogation bids thee to abstain,
But Trinity sets thee free again."

This Mistress Ford handed to Alice, desiring her to copy it for herself, and at the same time produced

a narrow roll of very yellow parchment, from which she proceeded to read sundry maxims of good advice to a daughter, which she handed to my sister, telling her to copy that also, to commit it all to memory, and act on it through life.

This copy Alice, years afterwards, gave to my daughter when she became Mistress Dolbeare, and the well known characters of her hand-writing I have now before me ; it runs thus :—

HOW THE GOOD WIFE TAUGHT HER DAUGHTER.

"Dear daughter, if thou wilt be a good wife, live lowly ; love God and go to church when you can ; don't let the rain stop thee, for thou farest best the day thou hast seen God,"

" Well proveth that God loveth."

"Willingly pay tithe and give freely to the poor, for seldom is that house poor where God is steward, for He well storeth him that honoureth the poor."

" In church pray, and not chatter to friend or relation, and scorn neither old or young, but be courteous to all."

" Through thy fair bearing,
Thy worship hath increasing."

"Love thy husband above all earthly things ; answer him meekly and he will love thee."

" A fair word and meek,
Doth his wrath slake."

" Be cheerful of speech, and gentle of mood, true in word and deed, and in conscience good. Be well mannered and not a romp, or rude, or ready to swear. In walking the street don't toss thy head or wriggle thy shoulders,"

" For she that catcheth an ill name,
It is to her a foul shame,"

"In town don't gad about from house to house, or get drunk on your cloth money. If in a place where good ale is going, drink moderately, that you fall into no blame."

" She that is oft drunk,
Thrift is from her sunk."

"Wisely govern thy household ; be not too sharp or too easy ; set them doing first what needs doing

most. Let them not be idle when your husband is absent; mark who doeth much or little, and quit them accordingly. When need be great, and time short, set to work thyself, and all will do better for it,"

"For many hands and wight (nimble),
Make heavy work light."

"Look after thy household when at work, and if thou see a fault amend it at once. See everything right when work is done, and forget not to take thy keys thyself; be wise and trust no one better than thyself. At term days pay the household and be generous to them whether they remain with thee or leave:

Thy good name is to thy friends,
Great Joy and gladness."

"Housewife, thou shalt work diligently on work days, for pride, rest and idleness make waste; and on Holy days thou shalt well worship God; care thou

More for God's friendship,
Than for the world's worship?"

"If thou be a rich wife, welcome thy neighbours with meat, drink, and honest cheer, to each after his degree, and help the poor man. But, daughter, be careful; make not thy husband poor with spending and pride: a man must spend as he hath;

Bleed a wren, according to his veins."

"If thy children rebel and are saucy, don't curse them, but take a smart rod and beat them until they cry mercy and acknowledge their guilt. As soon as daughters are born begin to collect goods for their marriage;

For maidens be lovely,
But to keep they be untrusty."

"Now, have them taught as thy mother did thee; think hereon night and day, and what man weds thee, he shall not repent;

Better were a child unborn,
Than a child untaught."

"May Christ, and Mary, and all Angels bless thee; may all the Patriarchs', Prophets', and our Ancestors' blessing be with thee, and well may thou thrive, my dear child,

For well is the child,
That with sin will not be filled."

So ran the old roll which Mistress Ford gave Alice ; I remember all present were amused with its advice and quaint mottoes, which served as a subject of conversation for the rest of the evening.

CHAPTER V.

THE PASSING BELL.

"When thou dost hear a toll or knell,
Then think upon *Thy Passing Bell.*"

"Prayers ascend to Heaven in troops
on a good man's passing bell"

Our church tower has five bells, which are thought mightily of by the good people of Ayshperton, for few towers in Devon have as many, and only the Cathedral at Exon more.

From time to time they have cost the parish much money, as accidents often happen, and the re-casting a bell is a matter of importance, for it must either be taken to Exon and brought home at great risk, or the bell founder must come and do the work here.

In 1487, two new bells were added to make the five, and about six years before these *recollections* commence, a bell was exchanged for one in better tune with the others, when Master John Gye himself rode to Exeter to take the note, that there might be no mistake.

But the great tenor bell was our glory, and could be heard a long distance, when skilfully tolled ; it was, therefore, generally used as the *passing bell*, for at that time it was customary to toll a bell for dying persons, in which it was supposed to serve two purposes ; first, to engage the prayers of all good people for the departing soul ; and also to drive away the evil spirits, which haunt the house of death in readiness to seize their prey, or to terrify or molest the soul in its passage, but were unable to come within the sound of the bell.

The fee, therefore, paid for tolling the passing bell, rose in proportion to the size of the one used on the occasion.

A year or two before my sister's marriage, when William, of Brownyswill, lay dying, on a stormy November night, the bell could not be heard half way up Tower Hill. John Gye said it was owing to the storm, but the people at Brownyswill declared that the sleepy Sacristan tolled in such a slovenly manner, that the dying man had a hard time of it, for the fiends were thick about the house and hooted like owls; now and then they tapped at the casement of the chamber of death as if to hasten the departure, and when at last death came, hollow yells and peals of laughter were heard far above the chimney, regardless of the feeble efforts of the bell to disperse them.

The fee charged for tolling was therefore refused, but as a stir was likely to be made about the matter, it was finally paid to avoid scandal; the great cross was carried at the funeral, and a free mass sung by the Vicar for the dead man's soul.

At all events, at the next feast of St. John Port Latin (May 6th), when the churchwardens are appointed, the parishioners, living at Welstor, Halshanger, Wilton, Goodstone and other distant farms, declared that, as they were obliged to pay tithes the same as those residing near the town, they were entitled to the same benefits, and urged on the new churchwardens the necessity of providing a heavier bell to use on occasions of Death.

The following year, when William Furze de Waye died, two men were sent into the tower to toll, which they did so lustily as to crack the great bell. Thereupon Master John Dolbeare and Roger Wyndeyat, who were the churchwardens, consulted with the Vicar, my Father and Master Ford about the cost of making a more heavy bell, that might be heard all over the parish.

Shortly afterwards Father and Master Ford, being at Exon, saw Master Robert Norton, the noted founder, on the subject, and got from him the cost; so it was arranged that after Christmas

(1509) he and his men should come down to Aysheperton and recast the bell making it cc. pounds heavier, which he said was as heavy as he could cast away from his foundry, and the same size as he had lately made at Plumtree.

So, early in February, 1509, Master Norton came down with his men and began to prepare for his work. The Churchwarden and he consulted as to the most convenient spot to perform the casting, as it was necessary, while being near the tower, yet to be on ground not used for burial.

Finally, Stranger's hill on the North West side of the tower was selected, there being only a few graves there, and those of non-parishoners, so no one's feelings could be hurt if any bones were disturbed; likewise it was adjoining Father Furneaux's (the Vicar's) garden wall.

Owing to the severe illness of Father Hellyer, the Presbiter of St. Lawrence Chapel, from which the good man never recovered, but died about Lady-day, the boys had ample time to watch all the proceedings, of which I took full advantage, and can therefore record the whole.

Master Norton himself fixed on the exact spot for the mould, and marked out a circle, about twenty paces round, from which the earth was thrown out to the depth of five feet; in this pit the bell was to be cast.

Next a furnace was built against the Vicarage wall; it was made of bricks and clay, with a high chimney; here the metal was to be melted. Some days were occupied in preparations, and many sacks of coal (charcoal) were brought from Borowood. Cow's hair, tow and other necessaries were collected, and a quantity of earth was sifted very fine, from which every particle of grit was carefully picked out. Among the small stones thus separated were found some old coins, which my father said he believed to be Roman, and showed that trade had been done at Aysheperton hundreds of years ago by that people.

The old bell had to be taken down; it was fir broken into fragments in the tower, and the pieces dropped out of the bell-chamber window; these

were then broken again into small lumps to be more easily melted, To provide the extra metal required, about 30lbs of white tin was bought of Thomas Matthew, our chief Tinner, who used to attend, as juror, the Stannery parliament, which assembles at Crocker-torre on Dartmoor; and two hundred pounds of copper was bought of Master Cockey, the brazier, of Totnes.

The founders soon began to make the mould, which proved a very difficult job. First, they fastened a stout stake firmly into the centre of the pit on Stranger's hill, around which, at the bottom of the pit, were cemented bricks, the exact size the mouth of the bell should be. On the top of the stake there was an iron peg, on which a cross piece of wood was pivotted, with a leg hanging down on either side, cut the shape of the *interior* of the bell. On the brick base they built up a *core* of brick work, around which the wooden shape could turn on its pivot, leaving a couple of inches clear. The *core* was then covered with a cement made of earth and horse dung, the surface being kept even by moving round the frame. A fire of coal was then lighted in the middle of the core, and the whole allowed to bake for a day. Then followed a second, third, and fourth layer of the same material each taking a day to bake.

The core, which represented the hollow inside of the bell, being finished, the frame was removed, and the inside of the side pieces cut away by the thickness the bell was intended to be, so that, in form, it then resembled the *outside* of the bell; the frame was again pivotted, and a mixture of earth and hair was applied to the core by the hand, after which some very thin cement of the same mixture was laid on in several layers, smoothed with the frame and thoroughly dried. Then a final layer of wax and grease was spread over the whole, and sundry patterns and letters to form an inscription, each well besmeared with melted wax, were stuck on.

The frame was then finally removed and the *model* was complete. The forming the *shell* or outside of the mould next commenced by putting a layer of very

fine sifted earth, tempered with water and mixed with cows' hair to make it cohere ; it was poured over the model and soon filled up the uneven parts and letters ; when perfectly dry, a similar but thicker layer followed. After that long hemp was mixed with the materials and spread on the pile. This shell overlapped and surrounded the brick base of the core, fitting tightly to it.

During the drying of the different layers a *model* of the top of the bell was prepared of earth and cows' hair. A cover of clay was placed over the top of the *core* where the fire had been put in ; an iron ring, fastened to the top, projected down into the hollow of the core from which the clapper was to hang ; all was cemented and smoothed with a wooden trowel.

Next small blocks of wood were inserted under the outer shell, on which were small wedges, which, when struck, lifted it from the model. The whole shell or case was then very carefully lifted out of the pit, and all the wax removed from the model, and the model itself broken up and taken off the *core*.

They burned straw under the shell to render the outside of the bell smooth, and then returned it to its place, letting it easily down into the pit, fitting over the brick foundation of the core.

The *cap* was put on, and two holes made near the top, through which to pour the metal into the mould.

The pit was filled in with earth and rammed very hard around the case, when the whole mould was declared by Master Norton to be complete.

The great matter of the casting now only remained to be carried out, and elaborate preparations were made for the operation. The Churchwardens were requested by Master Norton to fix an early day, and to give due notice to the parishioners, that they might attend to witness the ceremony, and come prepared with their offerings of silver, as is usual on such occasions.

The Vicar and Wardens met in solemn council, meanwhile all the townspeople were speculating as to the date to be decided on.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW TENOR BELL.

"Men's deaths I tell"
By doleful knell;

Lightning and thunder
I break asunder:

On Sabbath all
To church I call;

The sleepy head
I raise from bed;

The winds so fierce
I do disperse

Men's cruel rage
I do assuage."

At length it was announced that Lady-day, the first day of the new year (1510), was fixed for the casting, (prior to 1752 the year commenced on 25th March, and even now the 5th April, or old Lady-day, is the date on which the taxes are calculated to.)

Early on that day I was on the look out, and saw the great heaps of coal gradually become smaller and smaller, as the furnace continued to increase in heat.

The old metal, together with the new tin and copper, were placed in the furnace, the founders keeping it stirred with long poles thrust through two holes provided for the purpose.

After Mass the vicar, priests, churchwardens and leading inhabitants visited the operations, and threw in articles of silver, thereby to improve the tone of the bell. Father handed a massive silver tankard to Alice and me, which we carried to the furnaces and saw cast in. Master Ford, the Portreeve, threw in a silver dish; Margaret Ford a brooch which she valued, and other people various articles as they could afford, altogether several pounds of silver must have been given.

The casting took place in the evening, the molten metal flowed in a stream of fire along a channel of baked clay to the mould, sulphury fumes, and blue flames shot out of the holes as the fiery fluid gulped into the ground; the red light reflected

high up in the misty sky, looked awful, and scared the birds roosting in the ivy about the tower.

During the work the choir, who stood by in their white surplices, chanted the CL. psalm, beginning with "*Laudate Dominum.*" Then the vicar attended by the great cross and many candles blessed the liquid metal and offered a prayer, that St. Andrew, whose name the new bell would bear, would from that time take it under his special protection. After about an hour, Master Norton, all smut and sweat, came forward, and shaking hands with the vicar, and others standing by, declared that Ayshperton would now have a bell worth being proud of, for he had never made a more satisfactory casting.

The Portreeve ordered a tankard of mulled wine to be brought, and several measures of cyder were also consumed in drinking to the future welfare of the bell, after which we all dispersed for the night. The mould was not opened for some days, as the tone of the bell would, it was believed, depend in some measure on the time it was allowed to take to cool. At length the earth was removed, and the still steaming ground opened around the casting, and our new bell first saw light. It was then lifted out of the pit, and rolled on pieces of wood to the foot of the tower, to await the ceremony of blessing, or, as it was then called, christening by the Bishop. The churchwardens had wisely given Master Norton to understand that the bell must be properly weighed before they paid for the work. They having made inquiries at Plumtree, where they found that the new bell cast there, was paid for on Master Norton's word, and afterwards they discovered it lacked many pounds of the weight, which led to much expense and trouble at law. Master Thomas Matthew, the tinner, being accustomed to weigh heavy blocks of metal, fitted up a huge lever, by which the bell was lifted just off the ground and poised with weights at the other end, then the lengths of the lever were taken and after much figuring on the church door with a piece of burnt stick, the weight was declared to be MDCCCXVJ pounds, being CCIIJ pounds heavier than the old bell.

Our new parishioner, the great bell, remained at the foot of the tower, before it was raised to its place among its future companions, until Bishop Oldham, who was also our Lord of the Borough, could come and bless it.

John Soper, the carpenter, was busy preparing the woodwork for its reception, Roger Torryng, the iron worker, was fitting the iron work, under the careful eye of Master Gye, who knew more about bells and ringing than any one else in the place, and who was therefore entrusted by the church-wardens with the supervision of the bells in the tower.

So we all had ample time to become acquainted with its appearance.

It certainly did not look as large as I expected but was very handsome. Ribbons of moulding ran round the shoulders, and also just above the mouth. On the waist at one spot was the mark of the founder, a bell between the letters R.N. surrounded by a cable. On the opposite side was represented a lizard with a knot tied in its tail. A latin legend, all the letters of which were highly ornamented capitals, ran round one side, but I forget the words. The tone as it stood on the ground was said not to be in tune with the other bells, but Master Gye informed us it was impossible to judge the true tone until it was hung in the bell chamber.

It was not until early in May the Bishop came here, and then in a very quiet manner, having only his chaplain and two or three members of his household with him. The day was at last announced, and the churchwardens invited all tithe payers to act as sponsors, and take part in the ceremony of blessing.

On the morning of the day, a large number of neighbours came to attend the service, and the town had the appearance of a Fair-day.

After morning Mass, at which he assisted, Bishop Oldham came out of the church richly arrayed in his pontifical vestments, Cousin John led the procession, sprinkling holy water as usual, all the priests and deacons were present, acolites carried candles, and the choir chanted a grand hymn of praise.

Arrived at the bell the Bishop read a prayer, and hallowed it by sprinkling it with salt and water, then all knelt and joined in a general prayer, that God would vouchsafe to grant a lusty sound to drive away all devils, storms, and dangers, from the parish.

The anointing followed, in which the Bishop with holy oil carried in a Chrysmatory, touched its several parts, during which *Cantate Domino*, the XCVI. Psalm, was chanted. Then turning to the sponsors he required of them the name by which the bell should hereafter be known.

Master Dolbeare, being a churchwarden, stepped forward and gave the name of Andrew, upon which the Bishop poured water three times on it, pronouncing the name, marking it with the sacred sign of the cross at the top, at the waist and at the mouth.

A white linen resembling a rockette or surplice was then put over the bell by Walter the Sacristan, and the choir led another hymn of praise.

From the bell chamber window in the tower, which had been enlarged for the occasion, were lowered stout ropes which ran over pullies fastened to a piece of timber projecting over the top of the tower ; these were fastened by the Churchwardens to the eyes in the crown of the bell, and all the sponsors who numbered quite a hundred taking hold of the other ends of the ropes began to raise it off the ground ; as it slowly rose above the heads of the crowd and became visible to the people standing at a distance a loud cheer broke out, and the other bells rang to welcome their new companion.

Slowly it went up, and swung to and fro, now touching the tower with a deep ring, and anon hanging over the heads of the spectators ; but still upwards and upwards it went until Master Gye, who stood in the window guiding the ropes beckoned to stop pulling. Then balks of timber were projected under the rim, and it was permitted to slide easily into its place and was lost to view from below.

The Bishop led the procession back to the church, and another Mass was sung, and the sponsors took up their offerings to the high altar. Then ascending

the pulpit, Bishop Oldham, in a short sermon, explained to the people the reason of the ceremony, which was that the bell might act as a preventative against hail, thunder, lightning, and storm, and above all drive away evil spirits. When summoned by its voice to Mass or to private prayer we were to consider it was not the metal, but the voice of St. Andrew, whose blessed name it bears, that called us, and we must regard the bell as a sacred trust, committed to the parish for our good or evil according to the manner in which we obey its voice.

The sermon ended, all left the church, it being past mid-day, the afternoon and evening were spent in feasting, which lasted late into the night.

I now find from father's old papers, that Master Norton was paid at the rate of vii. shillings for casting each c pounds of old metal, and xxvii. shillings for each c pounds of new metal, the whole amounted to ix. pounds x. shillings and ij. pence. The sum of xx. shillings presented by the sponsors was given as was usual to the founders.

The expense was met as follows :

	£	s.	d.
By ye Churchwardens out of their fund	iii	xiij	iiij
From the store of St. George	ij	00	00
From Grene torches	00	xviij	j
The gift of ye Vicar	00	x	00
From last year's gathering ...	ij	viij	jx
Sum	jx	x.	ij.

So the new bell was all ready, save the hanging, which Master Gye promised to have completed by Trinity Sunday, so that Alice would have the first use of the full peal at her wedding ringing, which much pleased us all.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GOOD HOUSEWIFE.

"This I will say of the ladies of the Court, there is none of them but when at home, can help to supplie the ordinarie wants of the kitchen with a number of delicate dishes of her own devising. The eldest con, also skilful in surgerie and distillation, besides sundrie other things."—ELIZABETH'S COURT LADIES.

The casting the tenor bell has taken me into the new year, but I must retrace my *recollections* to give an account of how our household were employed that long winter and spring before my sister's marriage, during which time the preparations were continued with great energy.

Mistress Ford took upon herself to instruct Alice in matters relating to good manners, and household duties, whilst Mother and Aunt Prideaux endeavoured to teach her all kinds of household recipes, such as distilling strong waters from malt, and liquors from herbs which have medicinal properties, also how to make sundry dishes in cookery, which now and then we had an opportunity of tasting.

One day we were treated to a wonderful sausage called *Leche Lombard*, which had cost Alice a great amount of labour. Father Heliyer and Cousin John came in to pass their opinion, and they declared it fit for the Abbot of Buckfast. Unfortunately they liked it so well that I had to be content with the smell only, which as far as it went supported their opinion,

I was required to write the recipe into a roll, on which my sister wrote all sorts of things she thought might be useful. I can promise the collection was various, as the subjects treated on took in every kind of knowledge she could scrape together. Years afterwards this same roll was given by her to my only daughter Elizabeth, when she became Mistress Dolbeare, and now in my old

age my eyes rest again on the yellow skin, and my boyish writing brings back to my recollection memories of people and things long past away.

I will give a few extracts to show how my dear sister strove to fit herself for her coming duties as a wife of a county gentleman. I will commence with the Leche Lombard as that was the first I wrote in, and I remember I was promised that the dish should be prepared for the wedding feast, and then more than the smell should be my share.

LOMBARD SLICES.

Take raw pork, and pull off the skin, pick out the skin and sinews, bray the pork in a mortar with raw eggs, put thereto sugar, salt, raisins, currants, minced dates, ground pepper, and powdered gilly-flower ; place it in a bladder and let it seethe until it be enough, carve it in slices like peasecods. Then take large raisins and grind them in a mortar, put them in red wine with milk of almonds, colour with saunders and saffron, and put thereto powder of pepper and gilly-flower and boil together ; when boiled take powdered canel (cinnamon) and ginger flavoured with wine, mix all together and see that it be strained, and let it not seethe after cast together, then serve up.

HARE IN ONIONS.

Take a hare and flay him, make it clean, hack it into lumps, and seethe it in water with a little salt ; then take pepper and saffron with ground bread, temper it with ale. Then take onions and parsley minced together, seethe it by itself, afterwards put thereto a portion of vinegar, and dress over the hare, serve up.

CONEY IN ONIONS.

Take a coney and flay it, seethe it, and make as thou would'st a stew, save to chop it, cast in saffron, and mix wine thereto.

PETY-PANEL.

Take raw marrow, powder of ginger, yolks of eggs, minced dates, currant raisins and a little salt ; see that thou make thy paste with yolks of eggs, and that no water come thereto, form thy patty, and make up thy paste.

PAYN PUFF.

In the same way as *Pety-panel* make payn-puff, but make the paste more tender, and see the paste be round the puff as in a patty or pie.

MEDICINE TO RESTORE NATURE IN A PERSON.

Take three chicken, put them in a crop, and feed as follows :—Soak some wheat, collect a quantity of snails (that bear houses), and boil them with the wheat, throw away the shells and corruption, and feed the chicken with the wheat and bread, and let them drink of no water else than the snail water. And when ye be so disposed eat a chicken one day roasted, and two days after another, and so on as ye find it doth you good.

Probatum-est.

TO DESTROY A WRANG-NAYLE OR CORN.—Take wild tansey, and grind it in a mortar, make it smooth and lay it on the corn, and it will bring it out.

MEMO.—Aunt Elizabeth desires that when one is much acrazed (very poorly) there be given *viper-broth* and a fine filing of gold in some cordial waters.

ITEM.—Farmer Furze de Waye adviseth that if aught aileth any Cow, to cut a few hairs from the cow's tail, set them between a piece of bread and butter, and give it to eat unto the first strange dog that cometh by ; which is, quoth he, a sovereign remedy, and was told him by the wise woman at Widecombe. And if the dog will eat the same then the cow shall recover ; but if he utterly refuse it the cow shall die.

ITEM.—Four rules to keep teeth white and breath sweet :—

j. Wash well your mouth when you have eaten your meat.

ij. Sleep with your mouth somewhat open.

iij. In the morning take a linen cloth and rub your teeth within and without.

jv. But lest, peradventure your teeth become loose and filthy, I will show you a water far better than dentrifices for them.

"Take half a glass full of vinegar, and as much of water of rosemarie ; of myrrhe, mastic, dragons herb, roche allome, of each an ounce ; of fine cinnamon half an ounce, and of fountain water three glass-fulls ; mingle all together, and let it boil, adding honie half a pound ; then put in a little beng-wine (gum Benjamin—benzoin) and when it hath sodden a quarter of an hour take it from the fire, and keep it in a clean bottle.

Wash your teeth therewithall as well before as after meat, if you hold some of it in your mouth a little while, it doth much good to the head and sweet-neth the breath. This water is worth more than a thousand of their dentrifices.

During the winter mother and her maids, assisted by aunt Elizabeth, and with much consultation, was busy preparing Alice's wardrobe. Four new gowns were made, a russet kersey for every day, a rose coloured camlet for better, also a carnation silk guarded with black for high days, and a sad satin gown. Mother often told her to have a care of these gowns, saying they ought to last vj. years, and after that be cut up into kirtles for iiij. years longer. The materials, except the kersey which father got at Totnes, was bought from a peddler who comes round on Feast days with foreign goods from Dart-mouth.

The quantity of linen mother had prepared seemed to be endless, at least to me, a set of bed curtains had also to be finished which had been years making, they were embroidered with scenes from the legends from S.S. Andrew and Lawrence.

Father being an Attorney-at-law was frequently called to Exon, when the king's judges came round, on his return he often told us stories of what he had seen in that great city, and how many heads of people he had counted on the city gates. On his return from one of these visits, he said he had seen a famous wood carver and had ordered three oaken panels to be carved, to be made up into a linen chest for Alice to keep her goods in ; he thought either John Soper or John Mayne the carpenters could easily make them up into a lasting piece of furniture. He would not tell us the design, but said we must

judge for ourselves when they came home. Father was always very fond of designing wood carving for use in various parts of the church when repairs were needed. After a time, one evening, John Bowden, the carrier called, desiring to see father, saying he had brought some valuable work from Exon, and was ordered to deliver only into his hands, it had been sent by Master Martyn, the wood carver in the Cathedral Close, for which he must have the delivery token to take back. The package was wound round with rye straw, and securely tied. On opening it we found three square panels, on which were beautifully carved scenes from the history of S. Abraham. The first showed Abraham as an old man, carrying a chaffin dish of fire under his arm, whilst behind walked Isaac as a boy, with a bundle of wood ; the second represented Isaac kneeling on the sticks, and Abraham with a great knife raised as if in the act of slaying him, which an angel in the clouds above prevented by taking hold of the knife ; the third showed both Abraham and his son Isaac, standing by an altar on which a ram was being burned in sacrifice. There were also four pieces into which the panels were to be fastened to form the front of the chest, on each of these a minstrel was beautifully carved, one held a harp, another a pair of cymbals, and the third a flute, and the fourth a three-stringed rebec.

Father was very much pleased with the work, and the next day sent for the carpenter, and gave his instructions for making the chest, which was to be fastened together with wooden pins, in order that it might be carried in pieces to Stowford or elsewhere, and be securely put together again. When it was last finished, which was not for a month or two, all our friends said it was fit for a Cathedral vestment chest.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

"The next to this is New Yeare's Day, whereon to every friende
They costly presents in do bring, and New Yeare's gifts do sende.
These gifts the husband gives his wife, the father eke the childe.
And maister on his men bestowes the like, with favour milde;
And good beginning of the yeare they wishe and wishe again,
According to the ancient guise of heathen people vaine."

BARNABE GOOGE.

I must now give some account of our doings on Lady-day, or, the annunciation of the blessed Virgin as it was then called, being the first day in the year of our Lord 1510.

I have already written above how the new bell was cast in the evening, and that Father Hellyer lay on a sick bed a dying.

There are two springs of water in Aysheperton, which the good people then venerated as *Holy Wells*, of which they were very proud.

One was the *Ladwell*, at the bottom of St. Lawrence's Lane, which was dedicated to the Virgin, and then called Lady-well; the other *Gulwell*, a short distance down the Totnes road, in the corner of the vicar's glebe field, which was called after St. Gudula, the ancient patroness of blind folk.

A stone cross at that time stood by each spring, in fact, the tall stone still gives the name of *Stone Park* to the vicar's field, but the cross has been taken away.

It was a custom for girls who were likely to be married during the year to visit the Lady-well early on the morning of Lady-day; indeed, it was considered very lucky to see the first rays of the sun at the birth of the year reflected from its surface.

The well is large, but no one knows from whence the water comes, for it gushes up from the Earth

and flows away in a strong stream to join the Old Yeo. Father used to tell a story of how the town was once badly off for good water, the tinners had defiled the Yeo with their streaming works up the valley by Witton, and the springs were said to be poisoned, for the people who drank at the town pump got a distemper.

In their distress the people vowed to the Virgin, and on Lady-day a large spring of sweet water burst up out of the ground, and has since been called the Lady-well.

But to return to myself, I rose early to see the bell founders light their furnace in the churchyard, and was quietly going out of our garden, when I saw Alice and Old Dorothy, or Old Doll as we called her, who had been our nurse, and now lived on as a faithful servant, going along the path before me in the direction of Bloggis-hay-lane, so, guessing their purpose, I cut them off by crossing Prigge-mead ; and hid myself behind some bushes near the Lady-well.

The tall granite cross stood on its six-sided base, and around it were many women and girls kneeling in devotion. I could just see Alice and Old Doll among them.

They soon rose and took up their places by the pool, and stood stooping low watching for the first sun's rays. As it was a clear, frosty morning, with little mist, the sun had not long risen before it was visible in the water, then each strove to be the first to cross herself with a drop on the tip of the finger, in which Alice seemed to succeed, Old Doll having placed her on the western side where she could soonest catch the light.

They then produced small vessels, which they carefully filled, to keep as a charm until next year.

When the group parted, I slipped off to the bell-founders, and home in good time to await who should first cross the threshold of the front door, which had not been opened.

There soon came a knock, and, on opening, cousin Edmund came in, who has black hair, so we considered that our Lady and the Saints had been good to us, and would give our household a lucky year.

Before breakfast the presents were made. Mother's present to me was a new shirt, wrought with needlework, and to Alice she gave a pair of red hosen (stockings), with silver clocks ; Father gave Alice a pouncet box filled with sweet herbs, and to me a new bow, more strong than the one he gave me last year. Alice gave Father a basket of his favourite pippins, which she had hoarded from her own tree in the garden, and to Mother a pair of gloves, bought from the peddler. Cousin Edmund gave Alice a white hen, which he said was a good layer, and some arrows to me. Cousin John, when he called to greet us, gave Alice a charm intended to bar all evil spells from her who weareth it, and aunt Elizabeth Prideaux a *bowed tester* (crooked sixpence) to carry in her pocket as a nest egg for good luck.

When we returned from Mass, we found a messenger arrived in haste from Ivybridge, who delivered a packet to Alice, tied round with silk, the ends of which were enclosed in a large seal. It was addressed :—

" *To Mistress Alice Prideaux, be this bill delivered in haste at Aysheperton.*"

My sister, fearing bad news, cut the silk with a shaking hand, but her face instantly showed that there was no cause for anxiety, for, on opening the packet, she found it a bill (letter) from Adam Williams, which ran thus :—

" A New Year's greeting for my love."

This New Year's morn for want of jewels precious enough, for good hap I send thee my heart, and St. Andrew grant that you may live a hundred years without adversity or sorrow, and satisfy all your desires. I beseech you dear heart, accept graciously this poor gift, if only for my sake ; as it is a custom for many a day for one friend with another to give and take presents, my heart remembereth you every hour, so it is yours not mine, as Palmon gave his heart to Emely, and repented it not, so do I this gift to thee.

Ever more, without change for ever
Til body and soul part and dissever.

I herewith also send for thy acceptance a *cramp ring*, being one of the first which derive virtue from the touch of our Queen Katherine. I had it from a friend at Court, who tells me they be few that be of gold, for the King had the most part of them for himself.

If it please you to hear of my welfare, I am not in good health of heart, though well of body, no'r shall be till I hear from you. Commend me dear heart, to your worshipful father Master Prideaux, likewise to the good lady your mother, no'r in my haste do I forget the young sprig, your brother Robert. No more unto you at this time, but the Saints keep you.

This is indited at Stowford with a full heavy heart. By your own

Adam Williams.

Alice was wonderfully pleased, she put on the gold cramp ring which fitted her finger exactly, saying how glad she was to have such an one, for the cramp often seized her feet in bed and now she would be free from it, and exclaimed "Lauded be God, which hath given such power unt› the Queen's Grace of England, that the touching of this ring by her Highnesses hand shall make it of this great virtue."

Father then told us how the King's touch cured the evil, and that there was an authorised religious service for such occasions.

So while the man from Stowford was resting his horse and partaking of some refreshment, Alice ran up to Mistress Ford's house to give her advice on the matter of a reply to be sent. After a time she returned with a paper on which a reply was written. This original document, with numerous erasures and corrections, was found afterwards, among sundry odds and ends my sister left behind in an oaken chest she called her own, which went to Ivybridge with her wedding goods.

A packet, duly directed and sealed, was handed with a piece of silver to the man; on the outside it bore the following :—

Unto the hands of His Worship Master Adam Williams.

The reply within ran thus.—

"My right good lord, most knightly gentle knight,
Unto your grace in my most humble wise
I me commend, as it is due and right,
Beseeching you at leisure to advise
Upon this bill, and pardon my emprize,
That this rude bill shall put itself in press
To see your lordship of its presumptuousness
Ere I myself; but yet ye shall not miss
To have my heart before my bill I wis,
Which I commit and all my whole service,
Into your hands, demean it as you list,
Of it I care to have no more franchise
Than I heartless surely me wist,
Saving only that it be as trist (trusty),
And to you true as ever was my heart, and plain
Till cruel death divide it upon twain."

No more to you at this time save that I send herewith for your acceptance, a small partlet, with ribbon of my colours, which be rose and green. The Saints have you in keeping; and I beseech you that this will be not seen of none earthly creature save only thyself.

Endited at Aysheperton, with a full head for your welfare, this year's day of our Lord 1510.

By your own,

ALICE PRIDEAUX.

IX.

THE CHAPLAIN OF ST. LAWRENCE.

"Homo natus de muliere, repletus multis miseriis,"
sayth ye master of St. Lawrence.

JACK NAPE'S DIRGE.

Great gloom was cast over our town a few days after the casting our tenor bell, already described, by the death of our esteemed chaplain of St. Lawrence Guild, Father Edward Hellyer. For a day or two he was known to be in a dying state, and two days after Lady-day, Matthew, the sacristan of the chapel, came in haste to our house,

saying that Father Hellyer was not like to live out the day, "and he willeth," said he "that Master Brideaux bring his children to receive his parting blessing."

So father called Alice and me, and bade us haste with him to the good priest's dwelling in Lawrence-lane. Then, taking each of us by the hand, he led us upstairs to the chamber where our old friend lay in his bed, as white as the Rennes sheet on our best bed in the guest chambor at home, and so thin that it moved our hearts to see him.

There came a smile on his lips when he saw us, and he blessed us right lovingly.

"Robert," he said to me, "Dost thou mind what I have taught thee?"

"Yes truly," quoth I, and repeated the *Credo*, whereupon he asked me if I knew what was signified by *Credo*?

"Yes," said I, "truly to crede is to believe or to hold worthy of trust."

"Well said," quoth he, "and whereunto dost thou trust thyself wholly and entirely?"

"Unto God's mercy," I answered, "and the intercession of our blessed Lady, and all the holy Saints, and such good works as shall please God."

"Ah, Robert," quoth Father Hellyer, "I would thou hadst put somewhat in thine answer the which thou hast left out."

"What is that, Father, aan't please you?" said I boldly.

"I am a dying man, my child," said he, "and the dying see further into the other world than the young. From where I am I can see but one, and trust but one thing, which is the woful death and meritorious passion of Jesu our Lord."

Then the sacristan came somewhat uneasily to the bed side with a cup in his hand, saying, "I pray you take this physic, and leave talking, whereby you will be made weary."

"Leave thy fears, Matthew," said the dying priest with a faint smile; "Forbid me not to speak good of His name even here."

Then with all his little strength he drew his hands together, and feebly repeated, "In charitate

perpetua dilexi te ideo attraxi te ; miserans, and now, ad te suspiramus gementes et fleutes in hac lacrymarum valle."

"Holy Mother bless us," said Matthew, crossing himself ; "He is raving again, he taketh the holy words of the *Salve Regina* (an anthem to the Virgin) from their right owner, our most blessed Lady, to speak of our Lord her son ! haste away Master Prideaux, lest the children hear that which may soil their souls."

So with wet eyes father led us down the stairs and home by Bloggishay-lane, saying "poor old man, his mind his gone ; he knows not what he says."

We were not surprised in the evening when we heard the *passing knell* from the tower of St. Lawrence, which was only tolled for members of the Guild, and we all joined in fervent prayer for his easy departure.

Father said the good priest had been a pattern, and, although a Monk, had worked well with the parish priests, which was seldom the case.

It had been his principal duty to sing masses for the souls of his patrons, the burgesses, and so particular was he in this matter, that all had full confidence that he would get their departed relatives out of purgatory in the shortest possible time.

This was not always the practice, for idle chantry chaplains too often scamped their duty, to the pain and annoyance of the living, who frequently paid for extra masses elsewhere, lest through negligence the soul might be left in torment.

Thinking and prudent persons always feared to trust priests who spent their time in gay company, and who indulged much in sports of various kinds, with the awful responsibility of singing or saying masses for the dead.

Father Hellyer had also endeavoured to teach us boys as much of the mass service as possible, in order that we might the more intelligently follow the priest at the celebration. He also taught us English prayers to say at times when we could not follow, desiring us to occupy every minute in church with private devotion on our knees, and to

stand up and join in the service when we could do so.

He was also careful to teach us to say at night, a *Paternoster*, or *Ave Maria*, or both, for each of our parents, our brothers and sisters, and dear friends, instead of the usual prayer taught to children at that time, which ran thus

"Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed I lie upon ;
Four corners to my bed,
Four angels at its head ;
One to watch, two to pray,
And one to bear my soul away ;
God within and God without,
Sweet Jesus Christ all round about ;
If I die before I wake,
I pray to God my soul to take."

The Chapel of St. Lawrence is now robbed of its ancient glory ; it is only a ruin compared with its state fifty years ago, when the old Guild flourished. Father used to tell us how the Guild was founded by good Bishop Stapleton, who resided frequently at Aysheperton, at the Manor House in East-street, at the corner of Ave-head lane. He farmed the Manor demesne, and procured from the King (Edward II.) the charters for our fairs and markets, and also got the market-house built, for which purpose shipbuilders were hired, who made the shambles resembilng a ship upside down. He also built the chapel, and gave it to the Guild, which consisted of the portreeve and burgesses, to use as their chantry, on condition that they provided a chaplain to sing masses for his soul, and those also of the Bishops of Exon, before and after him, as well as for the members of the Guild.

The chapel was, as now, entered by the tower door, and presented a very neat appearance. Opposite at the eastern end was the high altar of S. Lawrence, over which hung a large picture of that Saint's passion, with the poor Roman christians standing in the background praying.

Father Hellyer often told us the story of how the good deacon Lawrence, when requested by the Magistrate to give up the treasures of the Church at Rome, of which he was the keeper, requested

three days to collect them together. The time was fixed for the third day, being 11th August, at which time he assembled all the poor, maimed, and widows of the Church, in the market-place. When asked for the treasures of the Church, he pointed to these poor people, saying they were the treasures committed by God to his charge. This act so enraged the Pagan magistrate, that he ordered the deacon to be roasted alive on a gridiron over a slow fire, which was immediately carried out, and so 11th August was kept as his day, when deeds of charity were performed to his honour, and prayers at his altar found special grace.

On either side of the nave were aisles, with small altars at the eastern end.

These were well provided with necessaries for service in the shape of cloths, plate, and banners; at these mass was said morning and evening for the dead; and at all times the chapel was open, and people dropped in and told their beads at leisure.

At the anniversaries of the deaths of burgesses whole families might be seen joining in the mass, when they gave alms to the poor who collected at the door on such occasions, and paid handsomely for the *dirge*.

The lower part of the tower opened into the nave with a high arch, which reached to the roof, and showed the handsome west tower window from the opposite end.

Here Father Hellyer was always to be seen, either before an altar or in one of the aisles, with a group of boys around him, teaching them parts of the Latin service. Much of his teaching, if put in protestant language, would now pass for reformed doctrine, and shows how many Romish priests, whilst performing superstitious rites, yet in heart were able to grasp the germ of truth which those rites overlay; but I fear the people were too blind and ignorant to benefit much by it.

We heard the Sub-Prior of Buckfast had attended and administered extreme unction shortly before the good priest's death. Soon after death the body was removed from the house into the

chapel, and there placed on a bier before the high altar, clad in his Monk's garments, in charge of a party from Buckfast Abbey, who watched and prayed until the funeral, whilst tall candles were burning around.

On the morning of the funeral more Monks arrived, and bore the remains in solemn procession back to the Abbey, for being a Monk he was buried in the cloisters there.

A large number of townspeople and all his scholars followed behind; slowly the party preceded by a great silver cross, went up Bowdenhill by the high road, as funerals could not go by Priests-ford, it being only a bye path across the marsh to avoid the hills. Then passing Somerhyll, we ascended through Shir-wood, at the top of which, at Black-rock, the Ayshperton people stopped, and from thence watched the procession descend to Dartbridge; now and then the funeral chant could be heard through the trees, and it sounded very solemn.

After a while, as we looked down on the extensive buildings of the Abbey across the river, we saw a party of Monks, headed by the Abbot himself, carrying banners and crosses, wind out through the great western gateway toward the bridge to meet the cortege. The great bell began to toll from the low square tower of the Abbey Church. Soon the whole party returned, bearing the dead, and passed through the western door into the grand old Abbey Church, and we saw no more.

The interment was to take place that night. So after dark some of us went again by to Black rock by the Priest's-ford path, and, after waiting some time, torches were discerned moving about in the cloisters on the north side of the Church, by which we could see the grave quite distinctly. Then the funeral party came out with candles, bearing the body, chanting a grand funeral hymn, which we could clearly hear.

The bell of the Abbey continued to toll, and after depositing the body in its last resting place, the whole brotherhood marched round the open grave, and, filing into the great refrectory, were

lost to view. By the aid of the torches in the cloisters we could see the lay brethren fill in the grave and pat down the last sods. When they left all was dark, except the lights from the numerous small windows of the dormitories.

Then turning our steps homeward we soon dispersed to our houses.

CHAPTER X.

The Wedding.

"And then they tied the holy knot,
Before St. Mary's shrine;
That makes a paradise on earth,
If hearts with hands combine."

Dunois.

The time for the wedding was fast drawing nigh, and everything was being made ready in our house. Margaret Ford, being a cousin and intimate friend of my sister's, was to act as chief bridesmaid.

As father wished everything to be done handsome on the occasion of his only daughter's marriage, all the family entered with hearty zeal into the preparations.

I well remember Father Furneaux, the vicar, calling the banns, and everyone in the church looking toward where we were kneeling.

The town gossips were even satisfied that the wedding was really to come off, and as at such times amusements were provided for the public, it became an event in which all Aysheperton took an interest.

A few days before Trinity Sunday the Sub-Prior of Buckfast called, and in the name of the Abbot offered to send from the Abbey a lay brother, who

was an experienced cook, to assist mother in preparing the feast ; this she did not much like, as it seemed a reflection on her own household, but by the advice of Mistress Ford and Aunt Elizabeth, she accepted the offer, and also invited the Sub-Prior to be present. So for two days before the time our house was reeking with savoury vapours from the good things in course of preparation, and I, being one too many in the house, was taken home by Aunt Elizabeth to stay with Cousin Edmund, the younger brother of Clerk John.

Then I found the Clerk busy preparing a new Miracle Play, to be acted on Corpus Christi Day, which was the following Thursday, and as he required a light boy, to be carried on shoulders in one scene of the play, I was chosen, and set to learn my part, which I found was really that of the principal personage in the play.

I found also that new clothes, and other necessary things, such as rattle-bags, devils' heads, visors, and stage-fittings had been obtained at some cost by the churchwardens. The new play was to be kept secret, so I felt bound not to tell my companions what was doing, which was a great privation to me.

My two chief comrades, Tom Matthew and John Dolbeare, tried me very hard to find out what kept me so much engaged at my cousin's house, but only got out of me that I was to take part in the Corpus Christi Play, which that year was to be an unprecedented display of talent and stage effect.

On Saturday arrived Master Williams with a very fine gentleman to act as chief bride-knight. They lay that night at the house of Master Ford, and as they brought their serving men, and all our cousins from Pensford and Widecombe had also arrived, the houses of our friends were more than full.

Master Vyvyan, the gallant bride-knight, made himself very much at home at Master Ford's ; he quite turned Margaret's head, for she could hardly talk of anyone else for weeks, everything was Master Vyvyan this, and Master Vyvyan said that, until Mistress Ford beat her well with a stick, and dared her again to mention his name before her.

Of this I was heartily glad, for one does not like

having a stranger of two days' acquaintance thrust down one's throat.

On the morning of Trinity Sunday, being 1st June, 1510, some time before the hour for High Mass, the wedding party assembled in the south porch of the church, outside the wedding door.

First arrived the bridegroom, bravely dressed, with a favour of rose and green ribbons, Alice's colours, in his hat ; he was led by Margaret Ford and the other bridesmaids, who were attired in favel-coloured (a bright yellowish brown) dresses, with top-knots of the same coloured ribbons ; some carried garlands of flowers, others bride-cakes for the wedding sop.

Then arrived the bride, dressed in blue, led by Master Vyvyan, Adam's chief friend, and the other bride-knights, of whom I was one, all wearing on our sleeves the bride's favours of coloured ribbon with sprigs of rosmary. There was carried before the bride by Master Ford, being an old friend of her family, a silver bride cup of sweet wine, with a bunch of rosmary therein ; the cup was also decked with the same parti-coloured ribbons of silk.

The rest of the party, which was a large one, followed behind, at the door we were met by the vicar and priests, who greeted us with *pax vobiscum*.

Father then exhibited the wedding contract with Master Williams, Adam's father, declaring the dower he gave with his daughter.

The bride and bridegroom, standing before the church door facing the vicar, repeated the marriage vows as follows :—

"*Ich Adam Williams take the Alice Prideaux to my weddid wyf, to haven and to holden, for fayrere for fouler, for bettur for wors, for richer for porer, in seknesse and in helthe, for thys tyne forward, til dethe us departe, if holichirche will it orden, and zer to iche plizt ihe my treuthe.*"

The vicar then took the gold wedding ring from Adam, and placing it on his book hallowed it with this prayer :—

"*Thou maker and conserver of mankinde, giver of spiritual grace, and granter of eternal Salvation,*

send Thy blessing upon thys ring that she which shall wear it, maye be armed with the virtue of heavenly defence, and that it may profit her to eternal Salvation through our Lord."

Then, turning to the clerk, he sprinkled it with holy water, and handed it back to the bridegroom, who placed it on the bride's finger, saying :—

"*With thys ring I the wedde, and zis gold and silver I the zeve, and with my bodi I the worschepe, and with all my wordly catelle I the honoure.*"

The bride then responded in a low voice after vicar :—

"*Iche Alice Prideaux take the Adam Williams to be my wedded husband, to haven and to holden, for fayren for fouler, for better for wors, for riches for porer, in seknesse and in helthe to be bonlich and buxum* (meek and obedient), *tyl deth us departe, if holichirche it wol orden, and zerto Iche plizt the my truthe.*"

The vicar then declared them to be man and wife, and led them the way into the church, all the party following the bride and bridegroom in procession toward the high altar, when High Mass was performed, after which we proceeded to our Lady Chapel, where the bride-cup of wine was hallowed by the vicar, and the cakes broken as sops therein.

When the vicar had made the sacred sign of the Cross on the cup, he passed it to the bride and bridegroom, who drank therefrom, and handed it round to all the party, who each drank, wishing happiness to the wedded pair.

The church was filled with townspeople and friends, who remained after Mass to see the bride-cup drunk. At the last word of the Benediction after Mass all the bells rung out a merry peal for the first time, the fittings of the new tenor having only been finished during the previous night, and certainly John Gye's strong arm made it boom bravely over our heads.

At the north porch had assembled a number of beggers, with all the cripples and maimed people for miles round, who offered their blessing and

demanded alms, which Master Vyvyan freely distributed among them; it was curious to see how agile and active some of the cripples were in scrambling for groats, who a few minutes before had been unable to move.

Here a band of musicians, with pipes, flutes, and other instruments met us, and marched in front, making a brave noise, which they considered music.

The bridegroom led the bride down the street, and all afterwards declared that she looked very well, although tears were seen in her eyes, caused by the idea of leaving home and her friends for good. Then followed Margaret Ford, led by Master Vyvyan, and the other maids each escorted by her bride-knight.

At our door had assembled all the guests who had been bidden by Father to be present at the feast, and who had been in the church to witness the ceremony; among them stood the jolly Sub-Prior, ready for his dinner.

We sadly missed the kind face of our good Father Hellyer, who would have enjoyed to take part in the wedding, which he had helped to bring about, and had always shown such interest in.

Arrived at our house, all prepared for dinner, and in the meantime they congratulated the happy pair, and offered their best wishes, and in many cases presented her with articles suitable for house-keeping. The weather was all one could desire, the sun having shone the whole morning, so that Mistress Ford was happy; for she used to say:

"Blest is the bride on whom the sun doth shine."

I must not omit to mention that to insure the bride's good fortune, the good lady had placed two drawn swords, in the form of a St. Andrew's Cross, over the inside of our front door, under which Alice should enter the house.

Then came the wedding feast. All the guests having assembled in our great hall, which had been cleaned out and newly strewed with fresh rushes for the occasion, sat down to long tables on tressels. The bride and bridegroom sat side by

side in the middle of one long table, with all their principal friends and guests on either side of them.

The music played at times in the little court outside, but as the players often stopped to drink, the music was not continuous.

The feast consisted of *five courses*, each of which seemed to me a banquet in itself.

FIRST COURSE.

At the head of the table there was a brawn with boar's-head, having a motto around the trencher :—

" Welcome you brethren in this hall,
Joy be unto you all,
That on this day it is now full :
That worthy Lord who lay in an ox stalle,
Mayntayne your husbonde and you, and your guests alle."

At the other end of the table were birds, with custards shaped like a lamb, to denote meekness, with this motto around it :—

" I meekly unto you am sent,
To dwell with you and ever be present."

There was also on the boards, frumenty potage, with venison, swan and roasted pig.

SECOND COURSE.

Venison in broth ; a sweet fruit-flavoured pancake called *Viande Rial*, made by the lay brother, which he said was much esteemed by the Abbot ; roasted venison, crane and rabbit ; also Alice's famous dish of Lombard sausage, in slices with a rich sauce. In the middle of the table was a device of a sitting antelope, with a motto around it thus :—

" Be all gladd and merie that sitteth at this messe."

THIRD COURSE.

Cream of almonds with sweets and wild birds, minced and sliced veal, different fish fetched from

Brixham, such as plaice and sole ; salmon from the Dart, caught at the Abbey fishery at Kilbury, sent by the Sub-Prior ; also trout and eels from our fisheries in the old Yeo. On the centre of the table, was a light spogy cake in device of an angel, with this motto :—

"*Thank all, God, of this feaste.*"

FOURTH COURSE.

A highly flavoured spice pie called Pyne Puff, for which Mistress Ford was famous ; cheese and hot bread, and before the bride and bridegroom the famous bride cake, or rather cakes, for there were several piled one on the other like platters, with this motto around the sides :—

"*God did decree ; Our unitie.*"

At the end of this course, Master Vyvyan and Margaret Ford, lifted the uppermost portion of the cake and held it over the heads of Alice and Adam, who thereupon kissed most lovingly; the cake was then broken and after the newly married couple had each taken a piece and tasted it, the remainder was handed round to all present, most of the young people reserving their pieces to dream on. Then Alice produced a packet of gloves which she presented to the bride-knights as a reward for their services that day.

FIFTH COURSE.

Brawn with mustard, grilled umblys of deer, roast swan and capons.

The drink was at the beginning of the feast good brown October ale and cyder, these were followed by some wines from France, after which sweetened sack or aquavite, was drank from small silver cups with two handles, which were passed round from one to another.

There were dried fruits, such as raisins, figs and dates, also nuts, but the season was too early for ripe fresh fruit, except a few strawberries from the gardens near Tarry-rock, which are very early.

Long before the feast was over, we heard shouts of merry-making from Priggemead, where a May-pole had been set up, and dancing was going on.

The younger portion of our party could sit no longer, so went direct from the table as soon as the Vicar had said Latin (returned thanks), to see the sports, whilst the elders followed in two's or three's at leisure.

The first thing we saw, was the scramble to catch a soaped pig, which father had given to the public. The borough crier proclaimed silence, at which the dancers left the ring, and the music stopped; then he made known that a pig presented by Master Thomas Prideaux would be let loose, and would be the property of him who could catch it first.

Amid much squeaking, the animal was well lathered with soft soap and water, and turned into the field. It was a most amusing sight, at one time the terrified brute ran straight between John Gye's long legs, and sent him toppling over; then it forced its way into a group of women, some of them holding babies in their arms, and others having children clinging to the skirts of their dresses, the women quickly made a lane through which master porker ran, closely followed by a score of rough shouting young fellows; now it turned and dodged through its pursuers and tumbled into the river, but came out with a grunt on the other side; at last after many attempts at its capture, the party made a ring around it, gradually hemming it in, then Mat, our old Simon's grandson made a grab at its hind leg, but being pulled on to his face he lost his hold, Jim Gye now jumped in front, and catching piggy around its body, dashed his hands under its belly, both rolled over, and for some seconds pig and boy appeared as one, as they tumbled and plunged, amid squeaking and yells of laughter. Jim still stuck to his pig until he was declared by the crier to be the fortunate winner.

Then came the game of barley-break or *last in hell*, played by several couples of young men and women. Stakes were placed in the ground to mark goals, at each of which only one pair could

be at the same time, the pair not at a goal were said to be in hell, and their object was to catch the others as they ran from goal to goal. A person once caught could not run with the same partner again, and when no fresh partners remained was said to be the last in hell.

The music again struck up, and Adam led his bride, followed by the bride-knights with the brides-maids, to take part in the general dance, during which each young man had the opportunity of a swing with the bride, also the young women with the bride-knights ; in this exercise Adam and Master Vyvyan excelled everyone, and introduced some novel court steps and airs, which almost turned the heads of the Aysheperton girls, much to the displeasure of their own young townsmen, who made free use of such epithets as *idle courtiers, n'er do wells, painted butterflies, popinjays* (parrots) and the like, at which the old people standing by laughed heartily, saying the girls always lost their heads when new faces, new clothes, or new fashions came in the way.

Leaving the sports, we returned to supper, which was another feast, after which the hall was cleared for the *cushion dance*, which closed the evening's revel, in which every member of the party, in fact of the household joined, it being continued by the humbler members of the family long after the principal personages had left the scene,

The dance commenced by the bridegroom taking a cushion in his hand, and dancing around the room to some well-known tune ; when the tune ended he stopped and sung :—

"*This dance it will no further go.*"

The musician answered,

"*I pray you Sir, why say you so ?*"

Bridegroom :

"*Because Joan Sanderson will not come too.*"

Musician :

"*She must come too, she must come too,*
And she must come, whether she will or no."

Then the bridegroom laid the cushion before the bride, on which she knelt, and he kissed her singing,

"*Welcome Joan Sanderson, welcome, welcome.*"

She then rose, taking the cushion, and both danced round singing :—

"*Prinkum-prankum is a fine dance,*
Shall we go dance it once again, once again ;
And shall we go dance it, once again."

Then after a round or two the music stopped, and Alice in her turn danced around with the cushion, singing :—

"*This dance it will no further go.*"

Musician :

"*I pray you madam, why say you so?*"

Alice :

"*Because John Sanderson will not come too.*"

Musician :

"*He must come too, he must come too,*
And he must come, whether he will or no."

Then she laid the cushion before Master Vyvyan, who in his turn knelt on it and saluted Alice, who sung :—

"*Welcome, John Sanderson, welcome, welcome.*"

This couple then danced together for a while, singing *Prinkum-prankum*, as before, others of the party joining in.

After which Master Vyvyan took the cushion, and in like manner drew out Margery Ford, who received his kiss with smiles and blushes. The dance not only continued until the whole party were taken into the ring, even down to *Old Doll* and *Mat*, Simon's grandson, but until all were dismissed, in much the same manner. In this part, Alice dismissed the bridegroom with the words,

"*He must go fro ; he must go fro,*"
"*Farewell John Sanderson, farewell, farewell.*"

But long before the last pair had been thus dismissed, we younger ones were busy playing hot-cockles and blindhood-wink in the passages and darker parts of the rooms, and Master Williams and Alice with the elders of the party had taken themselves off.

At a very late hour, Aunt Elizabeth took cousin Edmund and me back with her, and we were soon fast asleep.

Looking back on that distant date, and remembering that my good father was a most religious man, and always guided his family in strict conformity to the rules of the church, as taught by our priests ; it does now seem strange that it did not occur to any of the party, that in those rough and boisterous games there was the least desecration of the Sabbath day, but Popery encouraged such amusements in those days of her rule, which happily for England, are now I trust for ever at an end, our glorious sovereign Queen Elizabeth, being by the grace of God a true Protestant.

The next day, Master Williams and Alice left Aysheperton for Stowford, each riding on horseback, accompanied by Master Vyvyan and their men-servants, and followed by some pack-horses carrying the luggage and goods of the young couple. It was certainly a watery leave taking, but still my dear sister bore up well, as she waved adieus to her friends, who showered hand-fulls of corn on her for good luck, as they rode up the street, and were soon out of sight in the windings of Bowden hill.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CORPUS CHRISTI PLAY.

"Within the stage's narrow bound,
The whole Creation circles round;
Each soul with measured haste is driven
Through this wide earth to Hell or Heaven."

OLD PLAY.

On Wednesday after Trinity Sunday, being the eve of Corpus Christi day, the usual proclamation was made in the name of the Portreeve, that on the morrow no one should go armed, or in any way disturb the play, or hinder the procession, upon pain of forfeiture of his weapons, and imprisonment of his body.

That all craftsmen and others should take their places in the procession, upon pain of forty shillings, and all players be ready with their parts at the appointed time. That after the procession the usual plays of the Creation and Noah's Flood would be performed in the Parish Church, followed by a new mystery of St. Cristoffer, at which all persons were commanded to be present.

In the church workmen had been busy, and a stage had been erected by John Mayne, under the superintendence of cousin John, the clerk. It consisted of three platforms at different levels, the middle one being much the largest; these represented *Heaven, Earth and Hell.*

Immediately after Matins on Corpus Christi morning, at which everyone attended, the grand procession was formed in the church.

The four churchwardens which were Masters Richard Emmett, John Luscombe, Thomas Matthew, and my father, carried each a pole of the *baldachino* or canopy over the Vicar, who bore the Host in the crystal pyx. Cousin John led the party, sprinkling holy water, and the whole choir of priests and choristers chanted processional psalms and hymns. The Guild of St. Lawrence, headed by the Portreeve helped to swell the long procession in which all the trades and professions walked in their prescribed order, carrying their banners and insignia.

This solemn procession on leaving the church proceeded down West-street, and made the first halt before a small altar placed outside our house, it consisted of a table over which was spread a white linen cloth ; a crucifix with two lighted candles in mother's best silversticks stood thereon, the whole was decorated with flowers and evergreens.

Here a mass was sung, and at the ringing of the Sanctus bell the Host was elevated and everyone within hearing knelt on the ground.

The procession moved on until it reached another altar before a private house, where a mass was again sung.

This continued throughout the town, the Host being rested and a mass sung at each place an altar had been provided, until the church was again reached.

By that time the town was full of people, who had come from all parts, and peddlers and merchants were not wanting, so the streets assumed the appearance of a good pleasure fair.

The priests and a numerous party of monks then began the Creation play in the church, which was full to suffocation. When the curtain was drawn up, the three stages were in view ; on the highest which represented Heaven, God the Father was seen on a throne, surrounded by angels and saints, a great triangle to represent the Trinity, hung over head, amid quantities of drapery for clouds. He then proceeded to give orders for the Creation of the World. From the middle stage which was planted with boughs to represent trees, arose a flight of pigeons, to show the creation of birds, and numerous cats, dogs, and other small animals were let loose to represent the advent of animals.

Next Adam appeared. He walked about wondering at everything, followed by a large dog. He soon lay down under the bushes and slept, when God descended and extracted a huge rib bone of beef from his side, from which Eve was created, she being lifted from below through the floor. She was personated by a young priest, who had long hair composed of strands of rope, which hung down to the waist. Adam then showed Eve all the

wonders of the garden as they walked round the stage hand in hand.

On the lower stage which represented Hell, there was a commotion ; from two huge jaws in the corner, called *hell mouth*, which were hung with red cloth and out of which smoke and sparks issued, came John Gye at a bound. He was dressed as the devil, with enormous horns, a face like a goat with a long beard, a goat's skin on his body and red stockings on his legs, hoofs and tail were not wanting ; other devils, with horns and tails followed, and after a dance they consulted together, pointing now and then toward Adam and Eve. John Gye then sprang on to the middle stage, the other devils disappearing down hell mouth. Coming to Eve he bowed politely, complimented her on her beauty, and made many flattering speeches in order to induce her to taste an apple hanging from one of the trees. This after a time she did, then Adam by her persuasion tasted also. At that moment a terrible storm of thunder and lightening, with fearful yells from a host of infernal spirits, who issued from the yawning hell mouth came on to the lower stage and danced with the devil ; some carried lighted tow, others burning brimstone. At the same time an angel descended from heaven and violently drove Adam and Eve out of the garden. While the dance was at its height a voice from behind the scene pronounced in a solemn manner the word "Jesus," at which all the devils vanished screaming, amid a cloud of smoke into hell mouth. The curtain then dropped.

The next scene was opened by God Almighty descending to the middle stage and calling for Noah, whom he told he was sorry he had created such a set of ungrateful scoundrels and he intended to drown them all together. Noah interceded for them, but at last was ordered to get shipwrights from Plymouth, to build an ark, for he preferred English shipbuilders to any other ; this produced great applause. While the ark was building the devil used every device to retard the work, and tempted Noah's wife, who was a vixen, not to trust herself into the ark. In every part of the play the devil or his friends interfered and made as much

mischief as possible, in order to create amusement, in which he certainly succeeded very well. The play ended with an anthem, in which all the players joined led by the choir, and Cousin John on the organ. After the anthem all left for a time, as it was mid-day and refreshment needed.

After dinner crowds assembled to witness the new play of S. Cristoffer, and I remember how nervous I was, lest I should fail in my part. The stage was the same as in the morning, and when the curtain was drawn aside, behold a huge large-limbed giant, clad in skins, with untrimmed hair, beard, and mustachios, and he carried an enormous club. He wandered in a forest depicted by the boughs of trees on the middle stage. This was the heathen giant Cristoffer, who made a speech in which he extolled his strength and vowed he would only serve the most powerful master in the whole world.

He then wandered about the stage until he met a Paynim king, whose name was the terror of all the east, and from his vaunting words all the earth seemed to serve him. After some bargaining, the giant entered his service, and was put to do many great works, which he performed with skill.

After a time, the giant found the king sacrificing to his gods, and saw him greatly troubled because the omens were not satisfactory.

Then Cristoffer burst into a loud laugh, and brandished his club, exclaiming, "If thou fearest thy gods, then are they more powerful than thou. I abide no longer in thy service."

Departing from thence, he again wandered in the forest, and was met by the devil in the garb of a hunter, which only partly hid his satanic appearance who had jumped out of the jaws of hell to face the giant.

Then followed speeches between them, and the giant agreed to follow the Hunter of Souls, before whose might the Paynim king had trembled. So they journeyed together until they came to where a holy cross stood, then mighty fear came upon the Hunter, and he sought to turn back trembling. The giant enquired the reason of his trouble. The Hunter replied, "I fear Him whose sign is yonder;

much evil has he wrought me already." Then roared out the giant, "Thou too has't thy master, I will no longer serve thee, but will seek thy Lord."

Upon which the Hunter gave a yell, which was echoed by the devils below, and with a bound he disappeared down the mouth of hell.

Then followed the last scene, in which the giant while again wandering in the forest seeking the Hunter's Lord, was met by divers persons, who advised him how he might find the object of his search. A monk sent him to Buckfast Abbey to till the ground and pray, a soldier to the camp to fight for the cross in the Holy Land, a merchant would teach him to make wealth to found a religious house, and so on, until at last a holy hermit who dwelt alone in the midst of the woods came by and said, "Remain where thou art and convey across the river hard by, whomsover may apply to be taken across; peradventure thou wilt find Him whom thou seekest."

To this task the willing giant betook himself, and it proved far more difficult than might be expected, for from the lower stage the great enemy sent out his servants under all kinds of disguise to tempt or to worry him from his task.

Now a venerable merchant requested to be taken over, who in the middle of the stream threw off his disguise and turned into the devil himself, who blew such a blast of sulphur into the giant's face, that he was almost suffocated.

Then came a young damsel, who with winning words kept him waiting for a guardian who was supposed near at hand, all the time using her most enticing allurements to persuade him that he ought to be more careful of his health, and take some strong waters after his frequent wettings, but above all that it was advisable to have someone to keep his hut comfortable. She too turned into a fiend in mid-stream, and ran off with a loud laugh.

On one occasion a handsome young warrior came in a great hurry to the cross, saying he was on his way to join the king in a holy war, and argued with the giant telling him how much good his strong

arm would do the cause of his master in the war, whereas any man could work a ferry. Then he offered to instruct him in a new defence with his sword, requesting the giant to take his club and confront him. But Cristoffer was too wary, he had noticed the soldier's sword scabbard, hiss and steam, as a splash of water fell on it, so he declined, but refused not to carry him across, in which process the solidier's armour became red hot and nearly made him drop his burden for pain. This one also showed his horns and went off with a growl.

At length one night, whilst thunder and lightning rent the forest, and a deluge of rain swelled the stream, the good ferry-man lay sleeping on his couch of leaves. I came on the scene, as a little child dressed in a long white frock, and sat down by the stream hiding behind the trees. The child in a faint and feeble voice cried through the tempest :

" Come forth, come forth, thou stalwart kemp, awake
from out thy dream,—
Come forth and bear me over ; I fear to cross the
stream.
The night is dark, the night is wild, I may not tarry
long ;
Come forth and bear me over through the current deep
and strong."

Then out came the giant, and after searching by the river bank found a child weeping bitterly.

With wonder the giant said,

" Hast thou none to care for thee, so young and tender,
so feeble and so fair ?
Hard by is food and shelter ; rest here until the day,
And when the sun shines brightly, I will speed thee on
thy way.

The child answered :—

"Not so, 'twere long to morning light ;
Alone I travel onward, through the darkness of the
night.
Bear me quickly o'er the waters, I must cross them
ere I come,
To the rest I fain would enter, to the shelter of my
home."

Seizing a tall pine tree, the giant gently lifted me on his shoulders, and entered the stream; deeper and deeper he sank, yet stood firmly, although his burden appeared to become heavier and heavier until at last he exclaimed:

"What meaneth this? n'er yet so wearily
I crossed this running water; what marvel may this be?"

Child answered,

"Take heart, take heart, and fear no ill—
Nor rolling floods, nor swelling seas, prevail against my will:
Beyond, the shore is firm and good; look forward through the wave.
And fear not though thy staff should break, my arm is strong to save."

Giant:

"Then who art thou? whom winds and waves obey?
And what lack'st thou of human help to guide thee on thy way,
And wherefore seems it now to me, whom toil ne'er yet affrayed,
As if the weight of all the world were on my shoulders laid."

As these words were spoken, the other side was gained, and the exhausted giant laid the child on the bank, who replied thus to the giant's question:—

"Marvel not thy words are spoken right,
For thou in truth hast borne the world across the stream this night.
The world and He who made it; what marvel thou should'st be,
Weary and heavy laden in such extremity."

Then Cristoffer recognised in the slender child the Master he had so faithfully sought, and burst out:

"Thee only will I serve, till all my toils are o'er,
And through the stream of death then pass unto the blissful shore.
For great the power of awful kings set on their golden thrones,

And strong the gloomy Hunter, and the place where-
in he wones ;
And mighty is the whirlwind, when it snappeth
limb and bough.
Through all the rocking forest,—Greater, Stronger,
Mightier—Thou."

Then angels descended from the higher stage and carried the giant to heaven, where he was led up to the Almighty throne by the little child, and seated among the saints as S. Cristoffer.

At that there was great commotion in hell, all the demons yelled and danced ; the disappointed Evil One to make sport lifted a woman on his shoulders and pretended to carry her across the stream, but dropped her in the middle and rolled her about in the mock water to the delight of the audience.

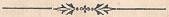
All the numerous actors joined from their respective stages in a grand anthem, and the curtain was drawn over the whole. So ended the new play of S. Cristoffer, at which all were highly pleased, I have recorded it as fully as I can recollect, because happily such blasphemous shows are now prohibited and only the old people remember them. It is well the young may know the character of religious amusements in the days of popery.

(In Littlehempston church, a stained glass window, represents S. Christopher carrying the child across the river.)

And now in describing the marriage of my sister, and the events connected therewith, I find the winter has slipped away. This morning my daughter Elizabeth (Mistress Dolbeare) brought her invalid brother a bunch of white violets gathered from the bank by the foot path on her way in, these flowers tell me that spring is come. I therefore lay aside my pen for the present, hoping to take it up again to continue my *recollections* next winter. I have experienced much pleasure in the memory of persons, and events long passed away which have been thus vividly brought to my mind.

Moreover I am now sad in heart, for my last beloved son is ill, three already sleep in our church-yard, and if this one is taken—which God forbid !

I shall remain the last of my name in this town. To attend to his wants and comfort is therefore my chief object, assisted as I am by my daughter, who comes in daily from Dolbeare, although she can ill leave her husband and young family.



CONCLUSION OF PART I.